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THE LIVING CHRIST

AND

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

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BY

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BIRMINGHAM.

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PREFACE.

THE Lectures printed in this volume were delivered to the Carrs Lane congregation, at irregular intervals, during the winter and early summer of the present year; the five first and the last on Sunday mornings, and the rest at the usual Thursday evening service.

For whom were they intended?

Eleven or twelve years ago I was preaching at Augustine Church, Edinburgh, a few months after Dr. Lindsay Alexander, a scholar and theologian of distinction, had resigned the pastorate. As I walked home with one of the deacons after the morning's service, he said some very gracious things, which I have unhappily forgotten, about the sermon; he also said some things, not so gracious, about the ministers who had served the Church since Dr.

Alexander's resignation; these, owing to some unamiable intellectual peculiarity, I remember. "Sir," he said, "they have preached to us as if we were all Masters of Arts." That was an error which I was not capable of committing, and therefore I deserved no credit for avoiding it. For if a preacher does something to form the habits of his people, the people do almost as much to form the habits of the preacher; and for thirty-seven years I have been the minister of a congregation in the heart of a great manufacturing community—a congregation in which there are never many Masters of Arts, although there are in it many men and women with an active, vigorous, and speculative intellect, and with a keen interest in public affairs and in current theological controversies. For such persons the Lectures were prepared, and they are published with the hope that they may be of service to persons of the same description in other parts of England.

In delivering the Lectures to a popular audience, it was necessary to repeat in several

of the later Lectures some things which had been said in the earlier. These repetitions are unnecessary in a printed book, but I have not found it possible to cancel them without reconstructing the whole argument.

To those of my readers who may wish to see the question of the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels treated with greater fulness, I recommend Professor Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, Dr. Westcott's *History of the New Testament Canon*, Dr. Lightfoot's *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* Dr. Wace's *The Gospel and its Witnesses*, Professor Sanday's *The Gospels in the Second Century*, and *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, by my friend Dr. Fisher, of Yale (U.S.), to all of which books I gratefully acknowledge my own obligations.

R. W. DALE.

LLANBEDR,
August, 1890.

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LECTURE I.

THE ARGUMENT FROM EXPERIENCE.

I.

THERE are large numbers of people who suppose that modern Science and modern Criticism have destroyed the foundations of Faith, and who cannot understand how it is possible, in these days, for intelligent, open-minded, educated men to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It may perhaps be well for us to remember that more than a hundred and fifty years ago there were large numbers of people of precisely the same mind. They believed that, as the result of the great changes which had passed upon the intellectual life of Europe since the Revival of Learning, the Christian Faith was no longer credible, and that its power was finally broken. Butler, in the preface to his *Analogy*, published in 1736, says: "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age,

this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

Throughout the seventeenth century an undercurrent of unbelief had been rapidly gathering strength in France, in Holland, in Germany, and in England. To check it Grotius had written his *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ*, Pascal had projected the great work, the fragments of which are preserved in his *Pensées*, and Richard Baxter, who, I think, was the earliest English writer on the "Evidences," had written his *Unreasonableness of Infidelity*, his *Reasons for the Christian Religion*, and his *More Reasons for the Christian Religion, and no Reason against it.* Towards the end of the century the hostile movement became so formidable, that Robert Boyle founded his famous lectureship for the maintenance and defence of the Faith against unbelief. The first of the lecturers was Richard Bentley, who, in 1692, discoursed on *The Folly of Atheism and Deism, even with Respect to the Present Life*—not a promising argument with which to meet those who were denying or doubting the supernatural origin of the Christian revelation. He was followed, year after year, by a succession of men, eminent in their time, and some of whom had extensive learning and great intellectual force; but the sentences which I have quoted from Butler show that, after the Boyle

lecturers had been lecturing for more than forty years, the assailants of the Christian Faith claimed the victory. The confidence of unbelief was as high when Butler wrote in the early part of the eighteenth century as it is now at the end of the nineteenth.

Then came a great change; and within sixty years the writings and the very names of the English deists were almost forgotten; the ponderous folios in which the first generation of Boyle lecturers lay entombed in public libraries were rarely disturbed, and were covered with dust;[1] and the fires of a great religious revival were burning gloriously in every part of the country. Faith was triumphant.

Now again, as in Butler's time, "it is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry." The temper with which all but the coarsest and least cultivated of those who reject the Christian Faith regard it is happily very different from what it was in the last century. They do not "set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule"; they

[1] "We too have had writers of that description, who made some noise in their day. At present they repose in lasting oblivion. Who, born within the last forty years, has read one word of Collins, and Toland, and Tindal, and Chubb, and Morgan, and that whole race who called themselves free-thinkers? Who now reads Bolingbroke? Who ever read him through? Ask the booksellers of London what is become of all these lights of the world. In a few years their few successors will go to the family vault of 'all the Capulets.'"—BURKE: *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* [1790.]

speak with respect, sometimes with pathetic regret, of the vanished illusions which once consoled the sorrows and sustained the courage, the hope, and the virtue of mankind; but still they take it for granted that, "among all people of discernment"—or, to use the current phrases, among all cultivated men who are familiar with the best and most advanced thought of our time—Christianity, as a religion claiming to have originated in Divine revelation, is a lost cause.

Their confidence is not, I think, as firm as it was ten or fifteen years ago; for they are beginning to discover that renewed and prolonged assaults on the Christian Faith—assaults from various quarters and sustained with great intellectual vigour and with all the resources both of the older learning and of the new sciences—have produced very little effect.

Fifty years ago, the discoveries of geology were supposed to be fatal to the inspiration of Moses; and it was contended that, if fatal to the inspiration of Moses, they must also be fatal to the claims of Christ as Son of God and Son of man, the Lord and the Saviour of the human race. The assailants of the Faith were sure that at last they were about to be victorious; among its defenders there was anxiety, anger, alarm. Ingenious theories were invented, illustrating the harmony between Genesis and geology; but plain men felt instinctively that they were very much too ingenious to be satisfactory. Since that time, Christian scholars have given themselves

more seriously than before to the scientific investigation of the literature of ancient races; and they are coming to the conclusion that, when the true nature of the earlier books of the Old Testament is understood, the objections to their authority suggested by the discoveries of modern science cease to be relevant. Meanwhile ordinary Christian people, who know very little about investigations of this kind, have frankly accepted all that the geologists have ascertained in relation to the antiquity of the earth and the antiquity of man; but their faith in Christ is undisturbed.

More recently, the conclusions of Mr. Darwin concerning the origin of species, and especially concerning the origin of man, created similar excitement. At first, and when the boldness and grandeur of his theories were very imperfectly apprehended, they provoked more resentment than apprehension; for they seemed to impeach the dignity of human nature. But the geological controversies had helped to discipline thoughtful Christian men to a new conception of the nature of Divine revelation and of the literature in which the revelation is preserved. As soon as it became apparent that the general conclusions of Mr. Darwin were sustained by the almost universal concurrence of the highest scientific opinion in Europe and America, most Christian people accepted them without hesitation — but with one necessary and reasonable reservation. It lies within the scope of the physical sciences to investigate the origin and history of the physical organization of man; but

their resources and methods are at fault when they attempt to investigate the origin and history of his ethical and spiritual life. By no process of development is the transition from mere necessity to freedom conceivable. The region of moral freedom, and of religious faith and hope, lies beyond the boundaries of the sciences that deal with a world of phenomena governed by fixed and unvarying laws. These distinctions however remain unknown to the immense majority of Christian people. They are assured that the highest scientific authorities are practically agreed in accepting the great outlines of Mr. Darwin's theory of the origin of species, and they are also assured that this theory is irreconcilable with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Through popular magazines, through newspapers, through a thousand channels, they are informed that the old beliefs concerning the creation of the heavens and the earth, and concerning the creation of man and the fall of man, are finally destroyed: but they still rely on Christ with their old confidence for the remission of sins; they still make His will the law of conduct; they still pray to Him for consolation in sorrow, for defence against temptation, and for strength in duty; and they still hope, through Him, for a glorious immortality. They are sure that the foundations on which their faith is built are firm and unshaken.

Assaults of another kind have been made on the traditional Christian beliefs during the last fifty years. Attacks on the historical trustworthiness of the Four

Gospels have taken a new form ; and the theories of their origin maintained by Strauss and by Ferdinand Baur have been discussed with great vigour all over Europe. The learning and the industry and the splendid intellectual vigour of Baur have produced a great impression on theological scholars ; but, if I may trust my own observation, neither the speculations of Strauss on the origin of the story of Christ, nor of Baur on the origin of the books of the New Testament have produced the general alarm that was created for a time by the discoveries of geology and their alleged conflict with the early chapters of Genesis, or by the theories of Mr. Darwin and their alleged conflict with the Christian conception of the origin and destiny of man. Forty or fifty years ago ordinary Christian people heard that an eminent German theologian had written a great book to show that the story of Christ in the New Testament was as mythical as the story of Hercules ; that the book had produced immense excitement in Germany, France, and Holland ; and that it had been translated into several European languages. They listened with astonishment, many of them with a certain scornful amusement ; but very few of them felt that this assault on the Christian Faith was at all formidable. Some years later they heard that another eminent German theologian was maintaining that most of the books of the New Testament were written in the second century, in the interests of conflicting parties in the Church, or to bring about a reconciliation

between them; that they were the productions of unknown authors, who, to add to the authority of their writings, had attributed them to Paul and Peter and John and Luke; that, to use the rough language of plain men, they were deliberate forgeries. Most Christian people listened to this account of the Christian Scriptures with indignation, and dismissed it as wholly incredible. It did not disturb their faith.

Nor has modern criticism on the Jewish Scriptures produced any general and enduring anxiety. The excitement which followed the appearance of the writings of Bishop Colenso, twenty or thirty years ago, soon passed over; and there is something very remarkable in the indifference with which at the present time the majority of Christian people regard the whole critical controversy concerning the Old Testament.

I do not mean that these successive assaults on traditional Christian beliefs—assaults in the name of Science, assaults in the name of Criticism—have had no disastrous results. There are many persons who are convinced that the ascertained conclusions of modern Science and of modern Criticism are destructive of the authority which has been attributed both to the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures, that the traditional opinions concerning the authorship and the dates of many of the books of the Old Testament are false; and that most of the writings contained in the New Testament are spu-

rious. Or, if some of the extreme conclusions of the destructive criticism are not regarded as finally established, it is known that great names can be quoted for, as well as against, them. And as it is assumed that the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures are the foundations of Christian faith, that we must believe in the genuineness and historical trustworthiness of these ancient books, and even in their inspiration, before we can believe in Christ, they argue that, until these discussions are finally closed in favour of the traditional opinions, faith in Christ is impossible. The controversies have not, in any large number of cases, destroyed faith *where faith already existed*; but where faith does not exist, they appear to very many persons to create an insuperable obstacle to faith.

To such persons, if they are serious and well informed, there is something perplexing in the persistency of the faith of the great majority of Christian believers. Among those who remain Christian there are men whose intellectual vigour, patience, and keenness are equal to their own; men who are their equals in general intellectual culture, and who know as much as they know about the currents of modern thought; candid men; men who are incorruptible in their loyalty to truth; men who have a due sense of the immense importance, in relation to the higher life of the human race, of the questions at issue: *How is it that the faith in Christ of such men is unshaken?*

This is the precise question which I propose to answer in the earlier lectures of the course which I begin this morning. It is not my primary intention to state the reasons why those who do not believe in Christ should believe in Him, but to explain *why it is that those who believe in Him continue to believe.* This explanation however ought to show that those are in error who suppose that present controversies on the authority of the Holy Scriptures make a firm and settled faith in Christ impossible.

II.

The substance of my first answer to the question why it is that those who believe in Christ continue to believe, may be given in a single sentence: *Whatever may have been the original grounds of their faith, their faith has been verified in their own personal experience.*

They have trusted in Christ for certain great and wonderful things, and they have received great and wonderful things. They have not perhaps received precisely what they expected when their Christian life began, for the kingdom of heaven cannot be really known until a man has entered into it; but what they have received assures them that Christ is alive, that He is within reach, and that He is the Saviour and Lord of men.

That they have received these blessings in answer to their faith in Christ is a matter of personal con-

sciousness. They know it, as they know that fire burns.

Their experience varies. Some of them would say that they can recall acts of Christ in which His personal volition and His supernatural power were as definitely manifested as in any of the miracles recorded in the Four Gospels. They were struggling unsuccessfully with some evil temper—with envy, jealousy, personal ambition—and could not subdue it. They hated it; they hated themselves for being under its tyranny; but expel it they could not. If it seemed suppressed for a time, it returned; and returned with its malignant power increased rather than diminished. They scourged themselves with scorpions for yielding to it; still they yielded. In their despair they appealed to Christ; and in a moment the evil fires were quenched, and they were never rekindled. These instantaneous deliverances are perhaps exceptional; but to those who can recall them they carry an irresistible conviction that the Living Christ has heard their cry and answered them.

The more ordinary experiences of the Christian life, though less striking, are not less conclusive. The proof that Christ has heard prayer is not always concentrated into a moment, but is more commonly spread over large tracts of time. Prayer is offered for an increase of moral strength in resisting temptation, or for the disappearance of reluctance in the discharge of duties which are distasteful, or for a

more gracious and kindly temper, or for patience and courage in bearing trouble, or for self-control, or for relief from exhausting and fruitless anxiety; and the answer comes. It comes gradually, but still it comes. We had lost hope. It seemed as if all our moral vigour was dying down, and as if nothing could restore it. The tide was slowly ebbing, and we were powerless to recall the retreating waters: but after we prayed it ceased to ebb; for a time it seemed stationary; then it began to flow; and though with many of us it has never reached the flood, the wholesome waters have renewed the energy and the joy of life.

Or we prayed to Christ to liberate us from some evil habit. The chains did not fall away at His touch, like the chains of Peter at the touch of the angel; but in some mysterious way they were loosened, and at the same time we received accessions of strength. The old habit continued to trouble us; it still impeded our movements: but we could *move*; we recovered some measure of freedom, and were conscious that we were slaves no longer. There still remained a mechanical and automatic tendency to the evil ways of thinking, speaking, or acting; but we had become vigilant and alert, and were prompt to resist the tendency as soon as it began to work; and we were strong enough to master it. In the course of time the tendency became weaker and weaker, and at last, in some cases, it almost disappeared.

Some men have appealed to Christ when they have

been seized with a great horror through the discovery of their *guilt*. It was not the awful penalty which menaces the impenitent that haunted and terrified them. Nor was their distress occasioned chiefly by the consciousness of moral evil. They feared the penalty, and they were humiliated and shamed by the contrast between ideal goodness and their own moral and spiritual life ; but what stung and tortured them, sunk them into despair, filled heaven and earth with a darkness that could be felt, and made life intolerable, was their *guilt*—guilt which they had incurred by their past sins, and which they continued to incur by their present sinfulness

When once this sense of guilt fastens itself on a man, he cannot shake it off at will. The keen agony may gradually pass into a dull, dead pain ; and after a time, the sensibility of the soul may seem to be wholly lost ; but a man can never be sure that the horror will not return.

The real nature of this experience is best seen when it has been occasioned by the grosser and more violent forms of crime. Men who have committed murder, for example, have been driven almost insane by the memory of their evil deed. Their agony may have had nothing in it of the nature of repentance ; they were not distressed because their crime had revealed to them the malignity and the fierce strength of their passions ; they had no desire to become gentle and kindly. They were filled with horror and remorse by their awful guilt. They felt that the

crime was theirs, and would always continue to be theirs; that it would be theirs if it remained concealed as truly as if it were known; indeed, it seemed to be in some terrible way more truly theirs so long as the secret was kept. It was not the fear of punishment that convulsed them; they have sometimes brought on themselves public indignation and abhorrence, and have condemned themselves to the gallows by confessing their crime in order to obtain relief from their agony.

Suppose that a man possessed by this great horror discovered that, in some wonderful way, the dark and damning stain on his conscience had disappeared; that, although he had done the deed, the iron chain which bound him to the criminality of it had been broken; that before God and man and his own conscience he was free from the *guilt* of it;—the supposition, in its completeness, is an impossible one; but if it were possible, the discovery would lift the man out of the darkness of hell into the light of heaven.

But to large numbers of Christian men a discovery which in substance is identical with this has actually come in response to their trust in Christ. Nothing is more intensely real than the sense of guilt; it is as real as the eternal distinction between right and wrong in which it is rooted. And nothing is more intensely real than the sense of release from guilt which comes from the discovery and assurance of the remission of sins. The evil things which a man has

done cannot be undone; but when they have been forgiven through Christ, the iron chain which so bound him to them as to make the guilt of them eternally his has been broken; before God and his own conscience he is no longer guilty of them. This is the Christian mystery of justification, which, according to Paul—and his words have been confirmed in the experience of millions of Christian men—is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It changes darkness into light; despair into victorious hope; prostration into buoyancy and vigour. It is one of the supreme motives to Christian living, and it makes Christian living possible. The man who has received this great deliverance is no longer a convict, painfully observing all prison rules with the hope of shortening his sentence, but a child in the home of God.

There are experiences of another kind by which the faith of a Christian man is verified. Of these one of the most decisive and most wonderful is the consciousness that through Christ he has passed into the eternal and Divine order. He belongs to two worlds. He is just as certain that he is environed by things unseen and eternal as that he is environed by things seen and temporal. In the power of the life given to him in the new birth he has entered into the kingdom of God. He is conscious that that Diviner region is now the native land of his soul. It is there that he finds perfect rest and perfect freedom. It is a relief to escape to its eternal

peace and glory from the agitations and vicissitudes, the sorrows and successes, of this transitory world. It is not always that he is vividly conscious of belonging to that eternal order; this supreme blessedness is reserved for the great hours of life; but he knows that it lies about him always, and that at any moment the great apocalypse may come. And even when it is hidden, its "powers" continue to act upon him, as the light and heat of the sun pass through the clouds by which the burning splendour is softened and concealed.

Further, "in Christ" Christian men know God; they know Him for themselves. The mere conception of God is as different from the immediate knowledge of Him as the mere conception of the Matterhorn from the actual vision of it as an external objective grandeur; and it is not the conception of God, but God Himself, that fills them with awe and wonder, and with a blessedness which trembles into devout fear. Sometimes the "exceeding weight of glory" is too great to bear, and human infirmity is relieved when the vision passes. At other times God is more than a transcendent glory to be contemplated and adored. His infinite love, to use Paul's words, is *shed abroad in their heart*, like the sun's heat under tropical heavens; it is immediately revealed. How, they cannot tell, any more than they can tell how the material world is revealed to sense; they only know that, apart from any self-originated effort, apart from any movement of their own towards Him, the

Eternal Spirit draws near to their spirit and reveals God's love to them. It is as if the warm streams of the love which have their fountains in the depths of His infinite life were flowing round them and into them. They are conscious of that love for them of which God is conscious.

And this blessedness is not the prerogative of elect saints, or of those who may be said to have a natural genius for spiritual thought. It is the common inheritance of all that are "in Christ," although there is reason to fear that many Christian people rarely reach the height of its joy. But among those who reach it are men of every degree of intellectual rank and every variety of moral and spiritual temperament. It is reached by ignorant men, whose thoughts are narrow and whose minds are inert, as well as by men with large knowledge and great powers of speculation; by men destitute of imagination, as well as by men whose imagination kindles as soon as it is touched by the splendours of nature or by the verses of poets. Men whose whole life moves slowly and sluggishly reach it, as well as men who are impulsive, ardent, and adventurous. And where this experience is known, it becomes an effective force in the moral life. Peter, writing to slaves, says, "For this is acceptable, if *through consciousness of God* a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully."[1]

[1] In the text of the Revised Version the words stand, "If for conscience toward God"; but in the margin an alternative reading is suggested, "If for conscience of God." This was

I have said that "*in Christ*" men know God—not merely *through Christ*. It is true that during His earthly ministry He revealed God; so that, in answer to the prayer of one of His disciples, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," He said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." That revelation has eternal power and value; but there are other words spoken by Christ that same night which suggest that it is not merely by the revelation of God during His earthly ministry that Christ has made it possible for men to know the Father. He said: "I am the true vine, and ye are the branches. . . . Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me. He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing." It is not certain that when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatian Christians he had heard of these words; but what they meant he had learnt

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Wiclif's translation, which reads, "If for conscience of God men suffereth heaviness, and suffereth unjustly," etc. In the older English writers the word "conscience" is often used where we should use "consciousness." Hooker, for example, says, "The reason why the simpler sort are moved with authority is the *conscience* of their own ignorance." We should say "consciousness." The Greek word which Peter uses has sometimes the one meaning, "consciousness," sometimes the other, "conscience." In 1 Pet. ii. 19 I believe that it means "consciousness."

for himself. He said, "I live: and yet no longer I, but *Christ liveth* in me." In various measures the experience of Paul has been the experience of Christian men ever since. Their relationship to Christ—their conscious relationship to Christ—has been most mysterious, but most intimate and most certain. They have meditated on the infinite love which moved Him to descend from the heights of God and to become man, upon His graciousness and gentleness, His purity, His spontaneous goodness, His pity for suffering, His merciful words to the sinful, His patience and His longsuffering, and His fiery indignation against hypocrisy; they have meditated on His teaching, on all the words of His that have been preserved concerning the love and grace of God, concerning the remission of sins, the gift of eternal life, the judgment to come, the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the doom of the lost; they have felt the spell and the charm of that ideal perfection to which He calls them in His precepts, and which He illustrated and transcended in His own character: but they have been conscious that it was not merely by the power of the great and pathetic story of His earthly history, or by the power of His spiritual and ethical teaching, that He gives to men the life of God, and constantly renews, sustains, and augments it. They shared the very life of their Lord. He lived in them. They lived in Him. And it was in the power of this common life that they knew God.

Nor is it only the immediate knowledge of God

that is rendered possible by this union with Christ. Christian men are conscious that they do not receive strength from Christ for common duty, as they might receive strength from One who, while He conferred the grace, stood apart from them, but that in some wonderful way they are strong in the strength of Christ Himself. They are too often drawn down into the region of baser forces, and then they fail; but their very failure verifies the truth of their happier experiences, for it brings home to them afresh what they are apart from Christ; and when they recover their union with Him—which indeed had not been lost, though for a time it was not realized—they recover their power.

III.

The man who has had, and who still has, such experiences as these will listen with great tranquillity to criticisms which are intended to shake the historical credit of the Four Gospels, although the story they contain may have been the original ground of his faith in Christ. The criticism may be vigorous; he may be wholly unable to answer it: but what then? Is he to cease to believe in Christ? Why should he?

Let me answer these questions by an illustration. Towards the close of our Lord's ministry, when he was in the neighbourhood of Jericho—just leaving the city or just entering it—Bartimæus, a blind man, who was begging at the side of the road, heard that

Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and he appealed to the great Prophet to have mercy upon him. Jesus answered his appeal, and gave him sight. Now it is possible that Bartimæus may have been told by some passing traveller, of whom he knew nothing, the story of a similar miracle which Jesus had worked a few weeks before in Jerusalem, and this may have been the ground, and the only ground, of his confidence in our Lord's supernatural power. If, after he had received his sight, some sagacious friend of his had asked him how it was that he came to believe that the Nazarene Teacher could give sight to the blind, nothing would have been easier than for his friend to show that, whether the story of the Jerusalem miracle was true or not, Bartimæus had no trustworthy evidence of its truth. A tale told by an unknown stranger! This was no sufficient reason for believing that Jesus had given sight to a man born blind. Did the stranger who told the tale know the beggar who was said to have been cured? Was it certain that the man was blind? Had the stranger examined his eyes the very morning of the day on which he received sight? Was it certain that the vision was not gradually returning? Was the stranger present when Jesus made the clay, and put it on the blind man's eyes; close enough to see that no delicate operation was performed during the process? The sending of the blind man to wash at the Pool of Siloam was suspicious: what could that washing have to do with a miracle? Did the

stranger go with the man to the pool, and keep his eye upon him while he was there? Was it quite certain that the blind beggar who was sent to Siloam was the man who came back to the city and declared that Jesus had healed him? Might not one man have been sent to the pool, and another man have come back to Jerusalem? It looked very much as if there were some previous understanding between the blind man and the Nazarene Prophet. The Prophet had rich friends; they could have made it worth the man's while to come into the plot. Had Bartimæus considered all these difficulties? Was it not more probable that the stranger's story should be false than that the miracle should be true? Would it not be well for Bartimæus to suspend his faith in Jesus until he had made further inquiries about the miracle?

We can imagine the answer of Bartimæus. I think that he would have said: "At first I believed in the power of Jesus of Nazareth, because I was told that He had given sight to another blind man; *now* I am sure of His power, because He has given sight to me. It is possible, as you say, that the story about the blind man in Jerusalem is not true. You have asked me many questions which I cannot answer. I cannot explain why he should have been sent to the Pool of Siloam. I acknowledge that the evidence which I have for the miracle is not decisive. As Jesus has restored my sight, I think that the story is probably true; but whether the story is true or

not cannot disturb my faith in Him, for if He did not heal the other man, He has healed me."

And so the faith in the Living Christ of those who have had the great experiences of His power and grace which I have described is not shaken by any assaults on the historical trustworthiness of the story of His earthly ministry. Much less can it be shaken by discussions concerning the nature and origin of the ancient Scriptures of the Jewish people. Their confidence in the books, both of the Old Testament and the New, may perhaps have to be suspended until the controversies of scholars are closed, or until, on historical and critical grounds, they can see their own way to firm and definite conclusions about the main questions at issue; but not their confidence in Christ. They may be uncertain about the books; they are sure about Him. Both Christian scholars and the commonalty of Christian people approach the controversies on these ancient records with a settled faith in the power and grace and glory of Christ. Their faith in Him rests on foundations which lie far beyond the reach of scientific and historical criticism. They know for themselves that Christ is the Saviour of men: for they have received through Him the remission of their own sins; He has translated them into the Divine kingdom; He has given them strength for righteousness, and through Him they have found God.

LECTURE II.

THE VALIDITY OF THE ARGUMENT FROM EXPERIENCE.

THE argument of the preceding Lecture may be challenged. It rests on the experiences of Christian men. But are these experiences to be trusted? Do they satisfy the critical understanding? Are they sufficient to justify faith in Christ?

I.

In reply to these questions it might be sufficient, for the moment, to say that, while experiences of this kind are strong and actually present they *command* certainty. They are as decisive and as irresistible as our physical perceptions of light and darkness. They leave no room for doubt. But I suppose that there are times in the history of most Christian people when the consciousness of God and of union with Christ becomes faint, and is even wholly lost, nor are they able by any effort to recover it; times when, if they pray, they seem to be speaking into blank space, not to a living God to whom they are akin, whose knowledge of them is deeper than their knowledge of themselves, and whose love passes the

measures of their faith and hope; times when all traces of those diviner powers which were once active in them seem swept away by the insurgent forces of their baser life, which spread over every province of their nature, creating everywhere confusion and desolation. In these dark and troubled days there are some firm and resolute souls that hold fast their faith in Christ, because they are still completely assured of the reality of what they saw and felt in happier times. But there are very many who are assailed by terrible doubts. They ask whether, after all, they can be so certain of the true nature of their past experiences as to live on in the power of them. Those instantaneous moral deliverances which, at the time, seemed to be the immediate effect of a definite volition of Christ's, exerted in answer to prayer, may they not have had another cause? Those movements of a moral and spiritual force which seemed at the time to be the manifestation of the exceeding greatness of God's power, may they not have come from unsuspected fountains of strength in their own life? That consciousness of God as Another than themselves which gave them such transcendent blessedness, that consciousness of living in Christ which made the invisible order so real, may it not have been an illusion—a glorious illusion, but still an illusion, and nothing more? Are they sure that their personal life is so perfectly healthy, and that their powers are so trustworthy, that no error was possible?

With Christian men whose temper is speculative and critical, these doubts will recur frequently; and not only in times of spiritual desertion. They will recur most frequently with persons whose religious life is predominantly subjective, and whose chief and almost exclusive concern is, not to please *God* perfectly, but to satisfy *themselves* that they are pleasing Him perfectly; who are very anxious to be sure of their own love for God, but who think very little of God's love for them; who dwell, not too much on their own duty, but too little on God's grace and on the glory of the Christian redemption. They believe and yet they doubt; and their introspective habit makes the doubt always present; they are never so possessed and mastered by the great objects of faith as wholly to forget it. There is very much in their experience that assures them of the presence and power of Christ: they are sometimes strong in a strength which does not seem to be their own; they are sometimes thrilled by the consciousness that their higher life is touching the very life of God; they sometimes think that they are living in Christ: but they are not sure of themselves. May not all these wonderful experiences be as unreal as the delusions which are the creations of a fevered brain?

II.

"The creations of a fevered brain": but why are we sure, when we are ascending the valley of Zermatt, that the majestic vision of the Matterhorn is not the

creation of "a fevered brain"? or, when we are strolling through the bazars of Cairo, that the rich colours, and the strange costumes, and the latticed windows, and the crowds of people of many races, and the water-carriers, and the lounging camels, are not projected by an imagination which has been filled with the *Arabian Nights*? Or, when we are listening to Handel's mighty hallelujahs, why are we sure that orchestra and chorus, and the tumult and the triumph of those exulting cries, and the rush of that glorious cataract of sound are not a private fancy of our own, an illusion, a dream?

If for a moment the doubt leaps into the mind, it vanishes quickly, when we find that other men see the majestic mountain or the delightful city, and that other men hear the victorious hallelujahs.

I sometimes wonder whether I should be sure that my own perception of the sun and the stars is trustworthy if I alone saw them. Suppose—the supposition is no doubt grotesque—that when the sun rose, though everybody saw and knew that the darkness had gone and the day come, nobody but myself ever saw the sun; and that when the day was spent, though everybody saw and knew that the light was lessening, nobody but myself ever saw the splendours disappearing behind the hills or sinking into the sea. Suppose that, although everybody saw and knew the difference between a clear and a cloudy night, nobody but myself saw the sparkling diamonds in Ursa Major. Suppose that no trace could be found, either

in ancient or modern literature, that men had ever seen these heavenly visions; suppose that no word for sun or star existed in the languages of either the East or the West, of civilized or of barbarous races. Suppose, further, that, while I, and I alone, saw the sun and the stars, many other men had a keener and surer eye than mine for all earthly objects, whether great or small, whether remote or near. It is certain that my alleged perceptions would be regarded by other men as wholly untrustworthy, and would be discussed by philosophical persons as the result of some abnormal and morbid condition. For myself, when I actually saw the sun rising morning after morning and ascending to the meridian, and when I actually saw the constellations glittering in the heavens at night, the conviction of their reality would be irresistible; and yet, side by side with this conviction, there would be doubt—doubt mastered and suppressed, but with life in it still, and certain to grow large and strong if, for many days and weeks, brooding clouds concealed the celestial glories.

But if, here and there, another man came to see what I saw; if, gradually, groups of men, men of very different descriptions, came to see what I saw; if these groups of men began to form in other countries, in distant latitudes and under distant skies; and if their perceptions corresponded to my own;—if then, by some surprising discovery of a lost literature, it became certain that the poets of a vanished people had sung of the stars and the sunrise and the sunset, and

that their sailors through century after century had taken observations of the celestial bodies, in order to steer their course across the ocean: if all these corroborations of what had been my private experience came to me, I should become sure of myself, and all doubt would vanish. They would add nothing to the vividness and certainty of my consciousness that I saw the sun and stars, but they would destroy the doubt of their outward reality created by the knowledge that other men did not see them. And so the knowledge that other men, as the result of their appeal to Christ, have passed into a diviner world, have found God, have received accessions of strength which they could not attribute to any sudden liberation of latent energy in their own life, have broken the chains of evil habits, have seen evil passions wither suddenly, as at the touch of an unseen hand, while it adds nothing to the distinctness or the power of similar experiences of my own, relieves me from the doubt which would worry my faith if my experiences were not shared by other men. It saves me from distrust of my own consciousness.

To large numbers of men this distrust is unknown. Their life is wholesome, healthy, natural, undisturbed by the nervous solicitudes of the introspective habit. What they see they see, and they are sure that the thing they see is *there*; they would be sure of it against the world. What they hear they hear; that other men have not heard it suggests no uneasy suspicion; that other men have heard it adds nothing

to their confidence. But there are many—and perhaps in these days they are exceptionally numerous —who welcome every confirmation of the trustworthiness of their own consciousness. As an English chemist might be grateful that some unexpected results which he had reached in his own laboratory had been reached by chemists in Paris or Vienna, who had made their experiments under different conditions and subjected their results to different tests, so there are many men who, however sure they may be that their own consciousness bears unambiguous testimony to the nearness and free personal activity of the Lord Jesus Christ, value the support which their own experience receives from the experience of other Christian men.

This is probably a large part of the explanation of the additional strength and firmness which faith derives from the biographies of saints and from books of devotion. There is something more than the kindling of the religious affections through contact with devout souls in their most ardent moods ; and there is something more than the access of power which results from receiving into the mind their finer conceptions of the majesty, the righteousness, and the infinite grace of God. Unconsciously to ourselves perhaps, there is a corroboration and verifying of the reality of our own experiences. What these elect saints saw we have seen, though less clearly. What they heard we have heard. We have passed into the same world as that in which they lived ; we recognise

the mountain ranges and the stars that shine in those fairer heavens: to them the glories of that diviner order were transcendently glorious; to us they are often partially concealed by cloud, and when the cloud breaks, our vision cannot bear the splendours for long, but the glories are the same. All that they report concerning what the grace and power of Christ achieved for them, concerning their ascents to new heights of life, and their access to God through Him, reminds us of passage after passage in our own personal history. What they found, not in the mere tradition of His earthly life and teaching, much less in the theology of the Church, but in Himself, we too have found. The more remote they were from ourselves in their ecclesiastical associations, in their speculative conceptions of Christian truth, in all the conditions and influences which determined their religious development, the more impressive is the identity between their experience and our own.

A similar corroboration of the trustworthiness of our religious consciousness is sometimes given to us by living men. I suppose that not unfrequently a Christian scholar, whose intellectual certainties concerning the Christian revelation have been violently shaken during a morning spent over his books, has had his personal faith in Christ immeasurably strengthened, within a very few hours, while visiting the sick, the aged, and the poor. He had begun to wonder whether, after all, the great historic conception of Christ in the Four Gospels, and the New Testament

story of the rise and the triumphs of the Christian Church, might not be accounted for without assuming that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of the Eternal, the eternal Word who became flesh for us sinners and for our salvation. He was asking himself whether what he had believed were his own most definite experiences of the present power of Christ might not have been the product of subtle and mysterious forces in his own life — forces which, as they were unknown, and not under the direct control of his own will, he had perhaps too inconsiderately attributed to an external source. This in the morning. In the afternoon he sat by the side of some poor, aged, and illiterate man, whose strength was slowly wasting and the conditions of whose life were very cheerless; but the old man had travelled by the same path that all the saints have travelled. His words, simple and rude, about what Christ had been to him, and done for him, had the accent of reality. And as the scholar listened he could recall, at point after point, identical experiences of his own. It was as if the man were telling the story of years which he had spent in some foreign country, which the scholar also had visited. They had seen the same cities and harbours and churches and palaces, the same ruins, the same mountains and rivers, the same crops, the same trees and flowers. The old man's account of them was very different from what his own account would have been; the old man's theories and explanations of them and his own were

still more different: but it was certain that what he had seen the old man had seen.

As he walked home he remembered corresponding experiences which had been told him by other men, and of which he had read in the lives of saints of other Churches, other countries, other times. He felt sure that different men—men belonging to different races and different generations—could not dream the same dreams. A man's private illusions are his own. If other men see what he sees, hear what he hears, feel what he feels, taste what he tastes, he may dismiss the fear that his organs are unsound. And so before the scholar sat down to his desk again at night he had recovered confidence in the trustworthiness of his own experiences. He had still to learn whether the Four Gospels contain an authentic account of the words and deeds of Christ in Jerusalem and Galilee more than eighteen hundred years ago; but he was sure that in our own time, and here in England, the Living Christ is the Lord and Saviour of men.

III.

The question may still be asked whether, while the controversy concerning the dates and the authorship of the Four Gospels is undetermined, these experiences can be a valid ground for believing in Christ.

The terms of the question need explanation. What is meant by believing in Christ? Believing in the traditional opinion concerning the dates and author-

ship of the Four Gospels? Believing in their historical trustworthiness? Believing in Luke's account of the birth of John the Baptist, and of the appearance to Mary of the angel who announced the birth of our Lord? Believing in the story, told by all the evangelists, of our Lord's feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fishes on the north-eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee? Believing in the story told by John of the raising of Lazarus from the dead? If this is what is meant by believing in Christ, then clearly no valid ground for believing in Him can be found in such experiences as those which I have described in this and in the preceding Lecture.

But to believe in Christ it is not necessary that men should believe that Matthew wrote the first Gospel, and Mark the second, and Luke the third, and John the fourth; men believed in Christ and found God in Him before any one of the Gospels was written. Nor is it necessary to believe in the historical trustworthiness of any one of the four. From Paul's account of his own preaching, it appears that he told the Corinthians "first of all . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once; . . . then He appeared to James; then to all the apostles"; and last of all to himself. A Corinthian who had heard this wonderful story, had

believed it, and had trusted in Christ for the remission of sins and for eternal glory, might have been a loyal and zealous Christian for many years before he met with any of our present Gospels. If the first that came into his hands happened to be the Gospel of Matthew, I can imagine that, without any faltering of his faith in Christ, he might, for a time, have been very doubtful whether it had really been written by an apostle, and whether it was trustworthy. There is nothing in it about our Lord's appearing to "Cephas" alone, or to "James" alone; or about His second appearance to "all the apostles"; or about His appearing to "five hundred brethren at once." He would find in the story many sayings of Christ of which probably he had never heard before, but which he would feel no other teacher could have spoken; but there were other sayings about which for a time he might be doubtful. None of the miracles would appear to him too great for the power of One whom he worshipped as Son of God and Saviour of men; about some of them he might have heard in meetings of the Church from men who had "known Christ after the flesh," and who were disposed on account of this knowledge to think they were better Christians than their brethren who, though they had not seen, had believed; as to the rest, he might hesitate until he was fully assured about the authorship of the narrative. In the power of his faith in Christ he might be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"; and yet he might be uncertain whether the

new story of Christ's life which had charmed him was really written by an apostle. To have faith in Christ is one thing; to have a sound opinion about the authorship of a book is another thing altogether. This was true in Corinth in the first century; it is just as true in England in the nineteenth. It is by faith in Christ that men are saved, not by a belief that Matthew wrote the first Gospel.

As faith in Christ is something wholly different from the belief that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the four narratives of our Lord's earthly life contained in the New Testament, so it is wholly different from a belief in the authenticity of these narratives. If, when my heart is dark with the sense of guilt, and all my strength is broken through despair of the Divine mercy, I trust in Christ for forgiveness, and the awful weight which crushed me is removed, and the light breaks, and I am conscious that in the mystery of my personal relations to the Eternal a great change has come, and that God has absolved me; if, having known in past days the blessedness of living in the presence of God, I am lonely and desolate because no sign or intimation of the presence of God is given me, and I trust in Christ to restore me to God, and the vision and the power and the glory return; if when the springs of life seem to have dried up, and there is apathetic indifference to all those invisible and eternal things which once filled me with awe, kindled fires of love for God and for man, created an exulting hope, transfigured the world, exalted the ideal

of conduct, and inspired strength and resolution to attempt to achieve it—if then I trust in Christ to have pity on me, and the "river of water of life bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God," returns to its deserted channels, and rises and overflows its banks: if, I say, Christ in answer to my faith does these great things for me, what more direct, appropriate, decisive evidence can I have that He is the Redeemer and Lord of men? It is the precise kind of evidence that I need to authenticate and confirm my faith in Him.

Suppose that we had an absolute certainty that Christ wrought every miracle attributed to Him by the four Evangelists, and that He delivered, not merely the substance of the discourses which they have recorded, but delivered them in the very words which have reached us: suppose that it had been possible to anticipate and to satisfy the conditions which alone, according to M. Renan, could make a miracle credible; suppose that, before our Lord raised the son of the widow of Nain, a commission had been constituted, composed of physiologists, chemists, great physicians, men distinguished for the accuracy of their observation and their mastery of the laws of evidence; suppose that the commissioners had fully assured themselves that the young man was really dead; suppose that they had designated the chamber in which the miracle was to be wrought, and had taken all possible precautions to prevent deception; and suppose that they had certified that, at the word

of our Lord, the young man had risen from the dead and walked home with his mother: and as this single wonder, so certified, would not, in M. Renan's judgment, have been a decisive proof of the miraculous power of our Lord, but would only have created "a probability almost equal to certainty," suppose that, when Lazarus died, another commission similarly constituted had sat, and with the same result: suppose—for this is necessary to the hypothesis—that the members of these commissions were men who had as large and exact and varied a knowledge of the physical sciences as could be found in Paris, Vienna, or London to-day, as keen a penetration, and an intellectual habit as cautious and as watchful: suppose that the conclusive evidence of their knowledge and of their skill was in our hands, that their integrity was beyond all doubt, that the genuineness of the separate reports in which they recorded what they had seen could not be contested: suppose that proofs different in kind, but equally demonstrative, assured us that Christ wrought the other miracles preserved in the story of the evangelists—walked on the sea, fed thousands of men with a few loaves and fishes, gave health to the sick, sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf: suppose, in brief, that the evidence of the historical truth of the Four Gospels were of a kind, not to invite, but to compel, unreserved and unqualified belief in every fact that they contain: would this—this alone—be sufficient to command faith in Christ?

Not without that continued experience of His great power and infinite grace to which every generation of His disciples since the Ascension has borne testimony. For what would be our condition, even though we were absolutely certain of the historic truth of the story of His earthly life, if, after He had risen from the dead and returned to the Father, He had given no sign of His presence and activity in the spiritual order; if through these eighteen hundred years He had delivered no penitent from the consciousness of guilt; if no despairing man, weary of his evil ways, but unable to forsake them, had ever received from Him strength to throw off evil habits, and to suppress sensual and malignant passions; if He had never raised those who trusted in Him from sin to saintliness; if none of God's lost children had been found by Him, and brought home to their Father? Would faith in Him have been possible?

Or, if the wonderful and gracious story of His earthly ministry created an invincible conviction that He was one over whom death could have no power; and if we made a great venture, and appealed to Him to forgive and pity and save *us*, as He forgave and pitied and saved men during His earthly life: how long would our faith in Him last, if there came no answer—no breath of heavenly air, no touch of Divine power, no light of comfort or of hope? The historic certainty could not sustain, even if for a moment it created, faith in the Living Christ.

And now let me make another supposition. Ima-

gine that, by some inexplicable fatality, the last three years of our Lord's earthly life had sunk into abysses of silence and oblivion as deep as those in which nearly the whole of His years from childhood till He was thirty years old have been lost; that the story of no miraculous work of mercy, the record of no word of power and comfort and grace, remained; that we knew nothing of His temptation, His tears at the grave of Lazarus, His agony in Gethsemane; that neither document nor tradition preserved the sermon on the mount, or His conversation with Nicodemus, or the parable of the sower, or the parable of the prodigal son, or the discourse which He delivered to His elect friends during the night in which He was betrayed; imagine that we knew nothing more than this—that He was a great religious teacher, that He had been crucified, that those who had loved Him believed that He had risen from the dead. If this were all we knew of His earthly history, the loss to the thought and life, the strength and the joy of the Church would, no doubt, be immeasurable. But it would still be possible to believe in Him as the Lord and Saviour of the world, and to find in Him eternal life and blessedness. For *the experience of the Church through century after century would remain to bear witness to His power to redeem men of every country and every race and every age who trust in Him for redemption.* It would still be certain that, from the time His earthly friends had their last vision of Him to our own days, men of every description have dis-

covered that when they speak to Christ, they do not speak into the air, but that He answers them, gives them peace of conscience, strength for suffering and for righteousness, and the immediate knowledge of God. Those who knew Him "after the flesh" bore witness to His resurrection from the dead, and declared that through Him men were to receive the remission of sins and the gift of eternal life. When that generation passed away the Christian Gospel did not become a mere tradition, resting on the unsustained authority of its original preachers; new preachers arose who themselves had received through Christ the remission of sins and the gift of eternal life. And the succession has been unbroken. Every new generation has learnt the Christian Gospel from living and original witnesses to the power and grace of the Living Christ, and has then transmitted the truth, confirmed and authenticated by its own experience, to the next. And so, if the books were lost which record the earthly life of Christ, my faith in Him as my Saviour from sin, the Lord of conduct, and the Giver of eternal life would still rest on strong and immovable foundations; for my personal experience of His power and love is confirmed by the experience of sixty generations of Christian men. I find that Christian faith often fails in those who live a solitary religious life; but I find that it is strong and vigorous in those who know the blessedness and power of the communion of saints.

LECTURE III.

THE DIRECT APPEAL OF CHRIST TO THE SPIRIT OF MAN.

I.

SIX or seven years ago, I had the honour of receiving as my guest a Japanese gentleman who had become a Christian. He spent only a few hours under my roof—he came in the afternoon, and left the next morning ; but, brief as the time was, I was impressed by his moral dignity, his nobleness, devoutness, veracity, and force. Those who knew him best had a deep admiration for him ; and he had shown the energy of his loyalty to Christ by making a great personal sacrifice in the service of the Church of which he was a member. He seemed to me to be one of those men who, without effort, and by the mere massiveness of their nature, assert ascendency and authority over other men. He had considerable intellectual culture, and great intellectual activity and vigour.

At night, when the house was still, I asked him how it was that he became a Christian. I reminded him that he and his countrymen were wholly sepa-

rated from the traditions of Christendom, and from that unbroken line of historic continuity by which we ourselves are united to those who first received the Christian Gospel. As we Europeans look back over the Christian centuries, we can see a succession of scholars, theologians, and saints, extending from our own times to the very beginnings of the Christian Faith. We can ascend from age to age, listening in turn to the testimony of every generation to the power and grace of the Living Christ, until at last we listen to the words of those who saw and heard the original apostles. But to the Japanese this great Christian tradition is non-existent; to them no fires light up the vast blackness of the eighteen hundred years which separate the present generation from the first generation of Christians. I also reminded him that, although the thought and civilization of Western Christendom had recently been exerting an immense and revolutionary power in Japan, the Christian Faith had not come to his countrymen with its authority unchallenged; that in the foremost nations of Europe the historical trustworthiness of the story of Christ had been assailed by men of great eminence; and that, side by side with Christianity, there had come to the Japanese a varied and powerful literature, which impeaches its claims, and calls upon Christian nations to surrender their Christian faith as an illusion. This, I believe, in substance, though not in form, is what I said to him in illustration of my question; and I then asked him

again by what path he had reached his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour of men.

His answer I can recall more closely and more accurately. He said: "I was a Confucian, and I studied the works of Confucius for many years. One thing at last perplexed me. Confucius often speaks of all good things as coming down from 'heaven.' Sometimes he speaks as if by 'heaven' he meant a living and benignant Person, who consciously bestows blessings on mankind. In other parts of his writings it seems plain that this cannot be his meaning. But the thought came to me that, perhaps, there is a great and mighty and kindly Person above us, and this excited me. I wanted to know whether it was true; and if it was, I wanted to learn all that could be learnt about Him. With this anxiety in my mind, I listened to the lectures of many learned men on the doctrine of Confucius, but did not find what I wanted. At last I heard a famous Japanese philosopher who was hostile to Confucianism, and was delivering a course of critical lectures on it. His lectures made me more dissatisfied with the system than ever.

"Just then a Japanese convert to Christianity gave me a Chinese Bible, and asked me to read it. He told me that the translation was a great achievement of scholarship, and that I should be charmed with its literary beauty. I found that he was right; the translation is admirable. I read page after page till I came to the thirteenth chapter of Paul's First

Epistle to the Corinthians, beginning, 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.' I read the whole chapter. I was arrested, fascinated. I had never seen or heard or dreamt of a morality like *that*. I felt that it was above the reach of the human race, that it must have come from heaven, that the man who wrote that chapter must have received light from God—from God, about whose existence I had been speculating. And then I read the Gospel of John, and the words of Christ filled me with wonder. They were not to be resisted. I could not refuse Him my faith." And so he became a Christian.

The story is worth considering.

When my Japanese friend received so profound an impression from the Epistle to the Corinthians, he asked no questions about the author to whom the Epistle is attributed: whether he claimed to have had a revelation from heaven; whether he was a man of a sound, healthy, reasonable mind, or whether he was likely to be the subject of illusions; whether, if a revelation had really come to him, all his teaching was to be received as the exact expression of the mind of the Eternal; whether he wrought miracles in proof of his Divine commission to make known to men a new faith, and, if he claimed to work miracles, what evidence authenticated them; whether it was quite certain that the Epistle was written by the man whose authority was so accredited; and whether, if

originally written by him, it was certain that the true, uncorrupted text had been preserved in the Christian Scriptures. None of these questions seem to have even occurred to my friend; if they occurred, they were at once dismissed as irrelevant. Had Paul received light from heaven? *The light was there:* my friend saw it—*saw it for himself.* He was sure that it could have come from no inferior source.

And when he was reading the Fourth Gospel, he did not check his wonder and awe by asking questions about the authorship of the book. He did not ask who John was, whose name stands in the title of it, or how he was to know that John wrote it. The story of the cure of the paralytic man at the Pool of Bethesda, the story of the feeding of five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes, the story of the gift of sight to the beggar who had been blind from his birth, the story of the resurrection of Lazarus—these were all very surprising, but my friend does not seem to have separated miracle from miracle, in order to find out whether the writer was actually present at every one of them. He did not subject each miracle to close scrutiny, in order to discover whether, after all, some natural explanation of it might not be possible. He had a masculine understanding, disciplined both by severe studies and by familiarity with affairs; it would have been natural for him to withhold his belief from such stories as these: but the vision of glory which came to him while reading John's account of our Lord's

life and teaching was a vision from another and diviner world; he fell at the feet of Christ, exclaiming, My Lord and my God! He did not ask whether the transcendent perfection could have been the creation of the love and reverence of Christ's disciples: the question was impossible; it would have been as easy to ask whether the splendours of Orion could have been kindled from earthly fires. He *saw* the Divine majesty and the Divine grace of Christ: what could he do but worship Him?

If at any later time he had begun to doubt whether he had really seen God when he saw Christ, his doubt would have received its answer in his personal experience of the reality of the Christian redemption.

II.

This was a case in which faith was *created* by the clear vision of the Divine glory in Christ; but there had been a long and effective preparation for faith. When the question concerning the conscious life and personality of the Supreme was raised by the ambiguities of Confucius, my friend did not regard it as being nothing greater than a subject of curious and interesting philosophical inquiry. It was a question which gave him no rest. It reached down to the foundations of the world and of human life. The depths of his heart were moved. He was not afraid to learn that there is a Living God; if he could only be certain that the "heaven" of which Confucius had spoken was the name of an august Person—

righteous, beneficent, in whom men live and move and have their being—this would be strength and blessedness. The Light which lighteth every man had pierced the clouds, and he loved the light, and longed to be more sure of it. When he read John's Gospel he found the light which he had been longing for. Men ought to know God when they see Him. My friend, when he saw God, knew Him.

In his case, as I have said, it was the vision of God in Christ which *created* faith; in the case of those who are already Christians, that vision confirms faith.

Their *Conscience* confesses that Christ is God. Apart from Christ, the authority of Conscience is supreme. She asks no inferior or co-ordinate power to support her claims; her accent is regal; from her word there is no appeal. And to Christian men Christ becomes an objective conscience. They do not argue that Christ wrought miracles; that therefore it is certain that He came from God; and that therefore He must be obeyed. His word is enough. Conscience recognises in Him the rightful Lord of conduct, and does Him homage. He speaks, "not as the scribes," nor even as the prophets of the older Faith, or as the apostles of the new. He stands alone and apart, the very Voice and Word of the eternal Law of righteousness.

Nor is it conscience alone that discovers His glory. *He appeals, and appeals immediately, to all those ele-*

ments and powers of life that give answer to the manifestations of the presence of God. What it is to find God or to be found of God every devout man knows, but the secret cannot be told. We feel His touch, and we know that the unseen Hand can be only His. There is a power upon us, and we need no visible sign or symbol to assure us that it is the power of the Eternal. A light shines; we know that it is Divine. In solitary places,—on the hills, by the sea, among the cornfields, in the woods,—in the crowded streets of great cities, the glory finds us. It finds us when we do not seek it; sometimes when we seek we cannot find it. And to Christian men these great hours often come when they are reading the Four Gospels. They witness a diviner transfiguration than that which Peter, James, and John saw on the sides of Hermon. They become independent of the proof-texts on which biblical theologians have built their argument for our Lord's divinity; as they read, Christ *commands* their reverence, their love, their worship. They may know nothing of theological definitions, they may be perplexed by the terms of the creeds; but to them Christ is what God is, and apart even from the authority of His own words, it would be in their hearts to say that, having seen Him, they have seen the Father.

III.

Are they deceived? May not the vision be a dream? Many of them would reply that, whether

they are deceived or not, the impression produced on them by the story of Christ in the Gospels is irresistible. As they are so made that fire burns and ice chills them, they are so made that the story of Christ, in its substance, compels by a kindly compulsion—or rather, inspires by a gracious force—a complete faith in its truth; they could as easily doubt the reality of the material universe as doubt the reality of the historic Christ. They would say that, however it may be with others, however it may be even with many who share their faith, there is for them no necessity that the historical "witnesses" should show their credentials; they care very little about the historical "witnesses"; for them the story itself is like one of the grander objects of nature—it could not have been man's work. It may, indeed, bear traces, easily recognisable, of the intervention of human agency, as there are easily recognisable traces of the intervention of human agency in the roads and paths on the sides of Helvellyn, and in the piers and docks on the shores of the Atlantic. But no human hands created Helvellyn or the Atlantic. The mountain was there, the ocean and its shores were there, before human hands touched them; and what human hands have done has not effaced, has not obscured, their true origin and greatness. And no human devotion or genius created the Figure of the historic Christ. He was there, He must have been there, before His story was told by the evangelists; and whatever signs of human

limitation and infirmity may be found in the story cannot diminish the force of the impression that it is in substance a true account of a unique manifestation of the Person and Life of God under the conditions which determine the manifestation of the personality and life of man.

To those who have seen God in the historic Christ, the trustworthiness of the story, as satisfying the ordinary tests of historic credibility, is no doubt an inquiry of great interest, but it is not of primary importance. The proof that the writers were honest and intelligent men, and that they were actual witnesses of Christ's wonderful works and actual hearers of His great discourses, or that they learnt what they have told us from other persons who had this original knowledge of what Christ did and taught, or that their story was received as authentic by persons who had the best means of knowing whether it was the story which had been told by apostles, is not the condition precedent of confidence in the substantial truth of their narratives. For the history is not an ordinary history ; if it were, it would stand or fall by the ordinary historical tests. It is wholly exceptional. Instead of resting upon the demonstrated credibility of the evangelists, it demonstrates their credibility.

There is nothing unreasonable in this. On the Christian hypothesis that the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal Word who became flesh and dwelt among men "full of grace and truth," and that His disciples "beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten

from the Father,"—on this hypothesis, we may expect that the true story of His earthly life will carry with it its own authentication. Is it wonderful, is it in any sense contrary to reason, that those who know God should recognise the accent of God in the words of His eternal Son, and the power and life of God in His character and history?

IV.

But, as I have said, even those whose direct vision of the glory of God in Christ has been clearest are not undisturbed by the clamorous protests of the inferior forces of their nature against the reality of the objects of faith; and they have to reckon with that critical faculty which is for ever questioning the trustworthiness and analysing the contents of consciousness.

Let no one suppose that Christian men know nothing of the philosophy of illusions, nothing of the mysteries and enchantments which are worked by invisible powers in the secret laboratories of life; that they have not discovered how easy it is for the mind to impress its own forms on the objects of perception, and to give them its own colour; how easy for the imagination and for strong emotion—apart from volition and against the strenuous effort of volition—to give such a body to subjective experiences that for the time they have all the solidity of objective realities. They too have had their dreams; and the dreams were so vivid that, when they woke,

the world of dreams seemed the real world, and the real world a world of dreams. They have seen ghosts—ghosts projected into the common air by some morbid and abnormal action of interior powers which have no name; ghosts gracious and kindly, ghosts cruel and terrible. They have learnt to scrutinise and to test with the coolest and most judicial impartiality the higher experiences of the soul. And their perception of the Divine glory in the historic Christ stands the closest scrutiny and the severest tests.

They know that in the hours in which they are surest that they are living in the Divine order, the glory of Christ is clearest and most unclouded, and that when they have the calmest and yet the strongest consciousness of the nearness of the Eternal the glory of Christ is most Divine. They know that in some wonderful way the historic Christ clears and strengthens that great faculty—whatever it may be named—by which they are immediately conscious of God. They know that, instead of their conception of God being contracted, dimmed, impoverished by finding God in Him, it is indefinitely expanded and ennobled and filled with a purer and intenser light. The incarnation of Christ, His miracles, His goodness, His sanctity, His gentleness, and His strength, His common human experiences, His blessed life in the Father, His promises, His menaces, the shedding of His blood for "the remission of sins," His resurrection, His ascension—these create a conception of

the Eternal far transcending, not merely in tenderness, but in grandeur and in majesty, and in all those elements of power which command reverence and awe, any conception of Him created by the immensities of space filled with the splendours of His countless worlds, or by the immensities of time through which, unfainting and unwearied, God in His solitary strength has sustained the burden of all created things.

V.

That the vision of God in the historic Christ is no illusion is verified by its correspondence with that knowledge of the *Living* Christ which is given in the personal experience of Christian men. For the Living Christ, who is the object of Christian faith, and whose presence in the Christian consciousness is the most potent force in the Christian life, is God, and yet Another than God ; He is man, and yet infinitely more than man. If His humanity is now transfigured by His Divine glory, there was a time when His Divine glory was manifested under the common conditions of humanity. The Christ who is on the throne of the Eternal once lived here. And Christian men are certain that, whatever imperfections may be detected in the story, they recognise in the Christ of the Four Gospels the same august Person of whom they have an immediate knowledge, and in whom they have found eternal life and eternal redemption. The conception of the Historic Christ given in the

Gospels is, in its substance, identical with the conception of the Living Christ given in their own consciousness. They interlock. They blend into one.

It is conceivable that we might have known nothing, either from authentic documents or from tradition, of our Lord's earthly history. Our historic knowledge of Him might have been no ampler than that brief Gospel which Paul says that he preached to the Corinthians, and which I quoted in the last Lecture: "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once; . . . . then He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared to me also." Whatever Paul may have told the Corinthians afterwards, his Gospel appears to have begun with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; and he then went on to recite our Lord's appearances to His apostles and disciples during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension, and last of all to himself. It is conceivable, I say, that we might have known nothing of that pathetic and glorious history which preceded the crucifixion; for us, the Gospel might have begun with the death of Christ "for our sins." Or, if we had known more, our additional knowledge

might have been limited to the brief summary of our Lord's ministry contained in Peter's discourse on the day of Pentecost: "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." Of Christ "after the flesh"—Christ in His place and work and sufferings in the natural and visible order of the world—we might have known nothing more than this.

Now, if all tradition of the earthly Christ had been lost to us, how impossible it would have been to construct an imaginary history of the years of His humiliation which would not have been incongruous with what we know of Him in His eternal glory—a history which would have given us the impression that He was really man, and yet the Son of the Eternal. But there is unbroken continuity between the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ as given in the Gospels and His present relations both to the Father and the human race. He is "the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever." The earthly Christ and the heavenly Christ are one.

He was truly man: was born, grew up from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to youth and manhood. He hungered and thirsted; when He was weary He slept; the sweat fell off from Him in His agony; He was crucified as a criminal; He

died. He grew in knowledge, and even in His maturity His knowledge, like ours, had its limits. He had the common affections as well as the common relationships of the race; some of His friends were dearer to Him than the rest. He was dependent on the Father as we are dependent; He was filled with the Holy Spirit; He was tempted; He prayed. When He was "made flesh," He accepted all the conditions of human life, and He never violated them. And yet from the very first there were premonitions and manifestations of His unique greatness. He was born—but not as other children are born. An angel came to the Jewish maiden who was destined to be His mother, and brought her this surprising message: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God." Before His birth the power of prophecy came on her. Soon after He was born an angel appeared to shepherds who were watching their sheep, and told them that the Christ, for whose coming the elect nation had been waiting for centuries, had come at last; and then they heard "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased." While He was still at Bethlehem, wise men from the East, who had seen a wonderful appearance in the heavens, which for them was the sign of the birth of that great Jewish Prince

of whose approaching advent there were vague anticipations in many lands, came to worship Him. Of His childhood we have only a passing glimpse. At twelve years of age He is in Jerusalem at a great feast; and for Him the temple is His "Father's house," in which Mary and Joseph might have been certain that they would find Him; and He is "sitting in the midst of the doctors," with open mind, eager to learn all that they can tell Him, but asking such questions and giving such answers, that "all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding."

When His public ministry began there was something new and strange about His teaching. It had a singular attractiveness and charm; men "wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth." He spoke—men felt it—on the strength of an original and direct knowledge of God and the will of God; He quoted the Scriptures, and they had their use for Him, else how could He have been man? but through Him a fresh word of God was heard: "He taught as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

His miracles fill the people with wonder. They are gracious, kindly miracles. He does not seek occasions for displaying His power; He exerts it as men need it. Some of these "signs" have a curiously felicitous, but most natural, connexion with events and circumstances which illustrate most vividly the reality of His human nature. He has had an exhausting day, and is sleeping in the boat in which

He and His disciples were accustomed to pass from one point of the shore of the Lake of Galilee to another—sleeping so soundly because of His exhaustion that the storm does not wake Him. How truly human He is! But He is roused by His friends, who are in great terror; and as soon as He is awake, He stands up in the boat, and rebukes the winds and the sea, and there is a great calm. He is much more than man.—At the grave of Lazarus, for whom He had a strong affection, He is troubled; the tears of Mary and of the Jews who are wailing for the dead move Him profoundly; He struggles with the violence of His emotion; He weeps. There is all the anguish of human sympathy and human bereavement. But presently He cries with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And His dead friend appears at His call, and returns home with Martha and Mary. He speaks in the power of God.

The impression of "authority," and of an authority of an altogether unique kind, produced by His earlier ministry is deepened as His teaching becomes fuller and more explicit. There is a new accent in all His words, even in the simplest of them; and there are passages in His discourses in which He assumes prerogatives and powers such as no prophet had ever claimed before. He forgives the sins of men. He calls to Himself all that labour and are heavy-laden, and promises that HE will give them rest. He declares that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them;

reminding us of the great Jewish saying, which was perhaps already current in our Lord's time, that where two of the devout sons of Abraham are studying the Divine law together, *there* is the Shechinah, the glory which is an assurance of the presence of the God of Israel. He is the Shepherd of the flock of God, whether they are in the Jewish fold, or scattered over the great waste and wilderness of heathenism; He has come to lay down His life for the sheep, and they are to become one flock under one Shepherd. To all that listen to His voice and follow Him He gives eternal life; and He says that they shall "never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hands." The life which He gives is not given once for all; those who receive it are continuously dependent upon Him; "apart" from Him they wither and die, like the branches apart from the vine. He Himself is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; "no one cometh to the Father" but by Him. He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him. To have seen Him is to have seen the Father. He will pray the Father, and the Father will send His disciples another Comforter — a Divine Person — to teach, strengthen, and defend them. He Himself will send the Comforter, and the Comforter will glorify Him. He associates Himself with the Eternal: "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him. . . . My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him." He is to die, but

His blood is to be "shed for many unto remission of sins." As for Himself, He has no sins that need remission.

He is man—really man; but He is not as other men. He is tempted; but the temptations which assail Him are such as might well assail the Son of the Eternal who had been "made flesh"; their appeal is to One whose personality is unique, and who is destined to unique sorrows and to unique greatness. He prays; but He does not pray with His friends, though sometimes He prays in their presence, and they hear the great words which He addresses to His Father. They are words which, while they imply the humblest submission and the completest dependence, imply also a freedom of access to God, resting on community of life and community of dignity, such as can belong to none but Himself. They express at once the reality of His eternal union with the Father, and the reality of His acceptance of all the conditions of humanity.[1]

The story transcends invention; it must be true. And this is the very Christ whom we know for ourselves, the Christ who has been known to Christian men for sixty generations.

[1] The argument in the preceding paragraphs is admirably stated and illustrated in the Hulsean Lectures for 1856 by Dr. Harvey Goodwin: *The Glory of the Only Begotten of the Father seen in the Manhood of Christ.*

LECTURE IV.

REPLY TO CRITICISMS ON THE PRECEDING LECTURES.

THIS morning I propose to discuss some considerations which may appear to invalidate certain positions maintained in the preceding Lectures, and then to inquire to what extent the conclusions which we have reached support the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels.

You will remember that the substance of the first answer which I have given to the question, Why is it that those of us who believe in Christ have continued to believe in Him, in the presence of the strong and persistent assaults which have been made from many quarters on the authority of the Christian Scriptures? is this: Whatever may have been the original grounds of our faith in Christ, our faith has been verified, and verified in many ways, in our own personal experience. Our case is the case of Bartimæus, the blind beggar of Jericho. His original reasons for believing in the miraculous power of the Prophet of Nazareth may have been inadequate; he

may have had nothing more to go upon than the story of a passing stranger about a blind man in Jerusalem, whose eyes Jesus had anointed with clay, and who, after he had been sent to wash in the Pool of Siloam, came back to the city seeing; the stranger himself might not have seen the miracle; he might only have heard the report of it; or, if he professed to have seen it, Bartimæus may have had no proof that he was an honest man, and that his word was to be trusted: but as soon as Bartimæus himself had received sight, no doubts, however grave, about the truth of the stranger's story would disturb his certainty that our Lord could work miracles. His original faith may have rested on evidence which subsequent reflection and inquiry showed to be unsatisfactory; but as soon as he himself saw the faces of his friends, and the streets and houses in the city of Jericho, and the waters of the Dead Sea, and the mountains of Moab standing like a great wall against the splendour of the clear, blue sky, his faith rested on immovable foundations of personal experience. And so the original faith of Christian people may have rested, or may have seemed to rest, on tradition, on the testimony of friends to the grace of Christ and the glory of the Christian redemption, on a belief in the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. They may discover that to build their faith on tradition is to build on the sand; after the lapse of years, the testimony of friends which at first so strongly impressed them may no longer retain its freshness

and power, and they may wonder that it should ever have had such decisive force; they may become familiar with the controversies concerning the authenticity and genuineness of the Four Gospels, and concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures generally, and they may be unable to see their way to any firm conclusions on some of the principal questions at issue. The original grounds of their faith—or what they supposed to be the original grounds of their faith—have vanished. But their faith in Christ is firmer than ever; for they know from their own personal experience that the Living Christ is the way to the Father, the Lord and the Saviour of men.

I.

It may be objected that the adherents of false religions can make the same appeal to experience in verification of their faith, and that therefore the argument from experience cannot be valid. It has been suggested to me that a devout Mahometan, for example, may be certain that his experience confirms the Divine mission of Mahomet, just as a devout Christian is certain that his experience confirms the Divine mission of Christ.

It might not, perhaps, be wholly unreasonable to reply that very few of us know anything about the religious experience of devout Mahometans; that the objection rests on what we *imagine* to be the experience of men of other races living in distant lands, and that it is alleged against what we *know*

to be the actual experience of our own countrymen. But I am anxious to attribute the largest conceivable weight to the objection; the consideration of it will give additional clearness to the real nature of the Christian argument.

What is it then that the experience of a devout Mahometan verifies? Does it verify anything more than the truth explicitly or implicitly contained in Mahomet's great message: that there is one God, awful in His greatness, whose will is supreme, whose power is too mighty for heaven or earth to resist, who is the strong Defender and eternal Friend of the faithful, and in whom men may find strength and courage and peace? This conception of God, though inadequate, is true as far as it goes. The devout Mahometan would be wholly in the right in maintaining that his experience confirmed his faith in the unity and awful greatness of God, and was an adequate reason for holding fast to it in the presence of the idolatries of heathen races, and of the degeneracy and superstitions of those Christian nations in which he could find no real and living sense of the august supremacy and the power and glory of the Eternal.

But from *experience* he can learn nothing about Mahomet. All that his experience verifies is the truth of a part of Mahomet's message. He may *infer* that the man who delivered so great a message, with such power and effect, must have been sent of God to deliver it; and I should not care to dispute the

inference. If he went on to infer, and to require me to admit, that everything that Mahomet taught—what he taught, for example, about the sensuous joys to which the faithful are destined in paradise—is also true, and is to be received as part of a message from heaven, I should raise an objection. I should say: "What you have verified in your own experience you are bound to hold as true; but that Mahomet taught some great truths is no proof that he did not teach some serious errors. The truth of those parts of his teaching which you have verified does not compel you to regard as true those parts of his teaching which, from their very nature, are as yet incapable of verification. This unverified teaching rests on Mahomet's authority; and there is nothing in your personal experience which can assure you of either the nature or the limits of that authority."

So much for what I might say to a devout Mahometan; I prefer to finish the discussion by addressing, not an imaginary Mahometan in Cairo, Constantinople, or Damascus, but yourselves.

The objection rests upon a false assumption. It assumes that what may be verified in the experience of a devout Mahometan corresponds to what may be verified in the experience of a devout Christian. But, as I have said, what the Mahometan can verify is simply the truth of a part of Mahomet's message, which was delivered twelve centuries and a half ago. What the Christian verifies is the present power and grace of Jesus Christ Himself. The truth verified

by the Mahometan has only an extrinsic and accidental relation to Mahomet. It would be an august truth, whoever had first proclaimed it to the people of Arabia; it is an august truth, whatever errors may have been associated with it in the teaching of the great man who actually proclaimed it. But the Christian Gospel, verified by the Christian, is not merely a truth or a body of truths first *taught* by Christ: it is a truth, a body of truths, concerning Christ *Himself*; in its very essence and substance it is related to Christ. Mahomet delivered his message; men received it; and from that time the truth which it contained was a great, living force in the world; and it is this truth which is verified in the experience of devout Mahometans: of Mahomet himself they have no experience. But Christ—not the truth which He taught, apart from Himself—Christ Himself is the effective Saviour of men in every country and in every age; and what is verified in Christian experience is that Christ Himself gives eternal life, quenches or subdues evil passions, and is the strength of all Christian righteousness; Christian men are conscious that, in the power, not of the truth which He taught, but of personal union with Himself, they have their place in the eternal order and know the blessedness of fellowship with God The devout Mahometan may *infer*, from his experience of the truth of Mahomet's message concerning the unity and awful greatness of the Eternal, that Mahomet, who has been dead for twelve hundred

years, was a prophet sent from God ; within what limits, and with what qualifications, the inference is valid, is a question for discussion. The devout Christian has an immediate knowledge of the Living Christ as the Saviour of men. This is not an inference from experience ; it is *given* in experience.

It has also been objected, that the adherents of corrupt forms of Christianity may appeal to experience as verifying, not only the general substance of the Christian Gospel, but specific corruptions of it ; and that therefore the appeal to experience is not decisive. For example, it is alleged that a superstitious Catholic who has committed murder, and who is tortured with a sense of guilt, may confess his crime to a priest, and leave the confessional with a light heart ; to him, therefore, it is certain that the priest has authority to absolve him from his crime. But this, again, is an imaginary experience brought forward to invalidate the force of an experience that is real. We Protestants know very little about Catholic criminals, or about the peace of heart which is given them by absolution.

But let us construct our case. We are to suppose that the criminal is oppressed with a horror of his guilt ; that he is not merely dreading the flames of hell. His conscience is inflicting on him intolerable torture ; it is the past crime which is the haunting, agonising terror, not the future penalty which may come upon him for having committed it. And we

are to suppose that, after receiving absolution from the priest, he is liberated from the sense of guilt, and liberated completely; his freedom is as buoyant as that which, according to our experience, comes in answer to our trust in the redemption and the infinite grace of Christ. This is the imaginary case.

But could this be a real case? Could it be a complete account of a real case? An imaginary criminal who has received from an imaginary absolution an imaginary release from the sense of guilt cannot be examined; his experience cannot be tested. But if I met a murderer coming out of a Catholic church with a face in which I could see peace and hope and thankfulness, I should like to ask him a few questions. When he confessed his sin, did the priest remind him that Christ had died for the sins of men? Did he himself recall that gracious, that awful form, extended on the cross, before which he had been accustomed, from his childhood, to bow with penitence and worship? Did he pass in thought from the crucifix to Christ—Son of God, Son of man, sacrifice for the sin of the world? Did the priest pronounce the words of absolution in his own name or in Christ's name? Was it in the authority and grace of the priest that he found rest of heart, or in the authority and grace of Christ, for whom, as he believed, the priest spoke? If the priest was but the channel of the mercy and power of Christ, then the man's experience does not contradict, but confirm mine; it was from Christ that he received release, and to Christ, not to

the priest, he would say with a grateful heart, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hast Thou removed my transgressions from me." If, on the other hand, it is supposed that the criminal did not pass beyond the priest to Christ, I should deny that the imaginary case could ever be a real one.

II.

An objection of another kind may be taken to the line of argument in the preceding Lectures. It may be said that, if Christian men were asked why they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they would not give either of the answers which I have given for them. Nine out of ten would reply that they believe in Christ because they believe that the whole Bible, from the first chapter in the book of Genesis to the last chapter in the book of the Revelation, was inspired by God, and that every sentence is covered by His authority. Or they would say that they believe that the Four Gospels were written by men whose word can be trusted ; that the miracles attributed to Christ were really wrought by Him ; that the miracles establish His claim to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world ; and that therefore they trust in Him for salvation. They would acknowledge with gratitude that they have the kind of experience which I have described, and that they see for themselves the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord ; but would say—some of them—that their faith would perish if they began to doubt the Divine

authority of any book, or any part of any book, in the Old Testament or the New; others, that their faith would perish if they began to doubt whether the Four Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

I think it very probable that a large majority of Christian men in this country would give one or other of these answers, and would commit themselves to one or other of these contentions. But it is very certain that very many of those who have the firmest belief in the inspiration and authority of all the books contained in that wonderful library of Jewish and early Christian writings which we call the Bible have never seriously examined the grounds of their belief. They are sure that the books are inspired, but, apart from their own experience of the spiritual force of the books, they can produce no reasons for believing in their inspiration; their belief, as far as it is anything more than an inheritance from the traditions of the Christian Church, is an *inference* from experience.

And it is equally certain that very many of those who have the strongest confidence in the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels have never investigated the grounds on which they believe that "there is satisfactory evidence," to use the convenient words of Paley, "that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their

belief in those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct." Nor have they ever passed on to inquire "whether the account which our Scriptures contain be that story, that which these men delivered, and for which they acted and suffered as they did." They would vehemently deny that their faith in Christ rested either on the authority of scholars or on tradition. They would insist that they have a personal certainty, which no assaults can shake, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of mankind. But as they have never investigated for themselves the historical argument for the genuineness and authenticity of the Four Gospels, their certainty cannot really rest on the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament story.

The real grounds of a man's belief, like the real motives of a man's conduct, are not always known to himself. Let me illustrate what I mean. I know a Nonconformist chapel, in which what may be described as a shallow, semi-elliptical apse behind the platform on which the preacher stands is screened off from the rest of the building by a row of Ionic columns, supporting, or apparently supporting, a massive architrave. A few years ago it became necessary to break through the screen, in order to place part of the organ in the apse. This innovation threatened the destruction of some of those stately columns, which were the pride and admiration of the men by whom the chapel was built; but the cata-

strophe was averted. All the space that was necessary for the organ was obtained by cutting away the lower half of the two central columns—they looked as if they were stone, they were really of wood—and leaving their two capitals with eight or ten feet of each of the shafts *suspended* to the architrave which they appeared to support. The columns had never supported what they seemed to support; the architrave had always been kept in its place by other means. That the lower half of the shaft of two of them has been removed is now concealed by the organ and its case. The columns are as important and stately as ever; they still seem to bear up a great weight, but two of them are hanging on to the architrave instead of supporting it. This is bad architecture; but something very like it may be seen in the architecture of human opinions and beliefs. The pillars—apparently of solid marble, really of worm-eaten wood—on which we imagine that some of our most important convictions rest, might be removed, and the convictions would remain firm and unmoved; they really rest on quite other supports—supports which are not apparent to the eye, and which we have never had the penetration to discover. The elaborate reasons, the formal demonstrations, which the intellect regards with pride as a row of stately columns upholding its faith, are *suspended* from the faith which is supposed to rest upon them. Cut through the columns half-way between base and capital, and the faith is undisturbed; but let the

strength of the faith itself be impaired, and then the reasons and demonstrations fall into ruins.

In common life it is not unusual to find men who have a sound, practical judgment, but who can give only a very poor account of the considerations which have determined their judgment. We trust them till they begin to explain. Their conclusions are sagacious; their reasons are worthless. The truth is that they reached their conclusions by a path which they cannot trace; their "reasons" are an after-thought; they are not the reasons which really guided them. Men of this kind have an understanding naturally strong and penetrating, and their fairness and self-control have prevented them from injuring an excellent instrument by rough usage. They have had an experience of affairs which influences them without their knowledge. Their experience has trained them—not *taught* them—to be courageous at the right time and to be cautious at the right time, to be trustful and suspicious with the right men. And so their judgments are right. But the intellectual processes by which their judgments are determined are of an automatic kind, and are too swift and too subtle to be recognised at the time, or to be discovered afterwards by a mind not accustomed to introspection; the ethical factors which assisted to give form and substance to the conclusion are likely to be wholly disregarded.[1]

[1] See a remarkable sermon on "Explicit and Implicit Reason"

It need not surprise us therefore if Christian men sometimes give very inadequate reasons for believing in Christ. It does not follow that their belief has no solid foundations, or that you can destroy their belief by destroying the reasons which they allege for it. These may not be the real reasons. Indeed, as I have said, the reasons which are supposed to be the support of faith are often supported by it. Men think that they believe in Christ because they believe in the Bible; they really believe in the Bible because they believe in Christ. They think that their Christian faith rests on their belief in the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels; their belief in the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels really rests on their Christian faith. They know Christ for themselves; in the Gospels they recognise the Christ whom they know; and therefore they believe that the Gospels are trustworthy.

III.

The question, Whether faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is an adequate ground for belief in the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, opens wide discussions, into which it is no part of my intention to enter. But the question, Whether faith in Christ is an adequate ground for believing in the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels, lies immediately in our way; for the historical trustworthiness of the

in *Sermons chiefly on the Theory of Religious Belief.* By John Henry Newman (1843).

Four Gospels will be the subject of the future Lectures of this course.

You will remember that I have said that in the Christ of the Four Gospels Christian men see for themselves the very glory of God. They know Him He is the Christ in whom their life is rooted, the Christ who has liberated them from the sense of guilt, broken or loosened the chains of their evil habits, extinguished or subdued the fire of their evil passions, given them all the strength they have ever had for righteous living. They recognise His voice, His tone, His accent. His words in the printed book—words spoken more than eighteen hundred years ago—sometimes come to them as if they were fresh from His lips; they could not have been spoken by any one but Him. The Christ of the Gospels knows their innermost heart as the Living Christ knows it. He has the same unique tenderness and the same severity, the same majesty and the same gentleness. It is in the power of that very communion between Christ Himself and the Father which is illustrated in the Christ of the Gospels that they themselves find God.

What is the legitimate inference from these great experiences? Do they authenticate the historical trustworthiness of the four narratives of our Lord's earthly life contained in the New Testament? Do they render unnecessary all critical inquiries? Do they close all discussion concerning the dates and the authorship of the several narratives?

That these experiences authenticate the *substantial* truth of the Four Gospels is obvious. To those who see the glory of God in the Christ of the Gospels, and who recognise in Him the Christ they know for themselves, and who is the Lord, the strength, the joy, the glory of their life, doubt concerning the *substantial* truth of the Gospels is impossible. But their substantial truth does not necessarily carry with it the certainty that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or even that they were written before the first generation of Christians had passed away. There may be — there are — very decisive proofs of another kind that the men who wrote them belonged to that generation; but the substantial truth of the narratives, as accounts of what was said and done by the Lord Jesus Christ, is not inconsistent with the theory that they were the product of a later age. For it is conceivable that a personality so powerful and so unique as that of Christ might have impressed itself with such force upon the first generation of His disciples, that they transmitted to their immediate successors a conception of Him as strong and as definite as their own, and that by these in turn it was transmitted to a third generation. In His whole character and spirit, in His relations both to God and to man, there was something so fresh and so original, that even if His earthly friends had left no written documents preserving their exact knowledge of His earthly history, the tradition of it could hardly have been corrupted by alien elements till a long time

after those who had known Him in Galilee and in Jerusalem had passed away. His teaching also was so different, both in substance and in manner, from all other teaching, that even the tradition of it would naturally and forcibly reject all foreign accretions. We know that before the third Gospel was written "many had" taken in hand to draw up accounts of the earthly life and ministry of our Lord; and as these narratives contained what had been "delivered" to the second generation of Christians by those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," there were written materials of the highest authenticity, which might have been used by writers of the third or fourth generation of Christians. Accounts drawn from such sources would have that substantial truth which Christian men recognise for themselves in the story of the Four Gospels.

We may see for ourselves the glory of God in the historic Christ of the New Testament; we may be certain that that gracious, pathetic, Divine Personality was not created by any human imagination; in that historic Christ we may recognise the living and glorified Christ, through whom we ourselves have received eternal redemption: and yet we may have to inquire in what age and by what persons the Four Gospels were written. Their substantial truth is not, in itself and apart from all other considerations, a final proof that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Uncertainty with regard to the authorship of the

Four Gospels, uncertainty with regard to the dates at which they were written, is not to be regarded as the sign of faltering faith in Christ. Questions of literature should be distinguished from questions of faith. Many great scholars are sure that the Gospels were written by the men to whom they are attributed ; but the acceptance of the conclusions of great scholars concerning the authorship of certain wonderful books is not one of the conditions of eternal salvation ; it is something wholly different from faith in Christ : nor is it conceivable that a confidence in the learning and judgment of the most eminent of scholars is a condition precedent of faith in Him. The tradition of the Church declares that we owe the story of Christ to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ; but faith in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour and Lord of men, is something wholly different from a conviction that it is impossible for the tradition of the Church about the authorship of the Four Gospels to be erroneous.

Very few of us have investigated for ourselves the grounds of the prevalent and ancient belief concerning the authorship of these sacred books ; we have accepted the tradition ; we have been satisfied with the judgment of great orthodox scholars ; but there is no want of religious faith in questioning, in doubting whether, after all, the tradition is absolutely trustworthy, or whether the judgment of scholars—even the greatest and most orthodox—is infallible.

Religious doubt is of another kind, and relates to other objects. Its roots are in the moral and spiritual life, not in the intellect. It has to do with the power and grace and glory of Christ, not with the conclusions of scholars or with the tradition of the Church. Do not be greatly troubled if, in conversation with a friend, or while reading an article in a review, you come to the conclusion that the argument for the early date of the Four Gospels is not so decisive as you had supposed. Do not imagine that your sense of uncertainty on a question of this description is any sign that your Christian faith is giving way.

But if, when it begins to appear possible that the traditional belief of the Church concerning the authorship of the Four Gospels may, after all, be erroneous, you are conscious—however faintly—of a certain sense of relief; if, with the intellectual doubt, you are conscious of any relaxation of the claims of Christ upon your loyal devotion and your unreserved obedience; and if the relaxation is welcomed rather than dreaded: then you have reason for alarm. Or if, when the intellectual doubt begins to fasten itself upon you, you can discover that you have been gradually losing the moral and spiritual sense of your own need of the Christian redemption; or that, perhaps, as the result of causes which you can trace, and for which you are responsible, your consciousness of the reality of that redemption is less vivid than it once was; if your thirst for the Living God has been less urgent; if the satisfaction

of that thirst has been less refreshing and animating ; then there are grave reasons for anxiety. The intellectual doubt which is an assailant from the outside has its confederates in the very citadel of your moral and spiritual life. When faith has been surrendered, you may imagine that you have had no choice, that your intellectual integrity forced you to abandon it ; and yet the surrender might never have been made but for the treachery of internal foes.

LECTURE V.

THE HISTORICAL TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STORY CONTAINED IN THE FOUR GOSPELS: HOW SHOULD THE EVIDENCE BE APPROACHED?

IN the preceding Lectures I have endeavoured to explain how it is that the faith of the majority of Christian people has not been shaken by the storm of criticism which, during the whole lifetime of the present generation, has been beating on the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. I have endeavoured to show that, even while a Christian man is unable to reach any definite and secure conclusion on the controversy concerning the origin of the Four Gospels, his faith in Christ as Son of God and Saviour of men may remain firm; that he has grounds and reasons for his faith which lie beyond the reach of criticism concerning the authorship and authenticity of these wonderful narratives; that he stands on a rock, and that "the floods of great waters," when they rise highest and rage most fiercely, cannot "come nigh unto him."

But though faith in the Lord Jesus Christ may remain firm, while the historical trustworthiness of

the only story that has come down to us of His earthly ministry is regarded as uncertain, Christian life and thought suffer a loss which cannot be measured. In the remaining Lectures of this course I therefore propose to lay before you some of the evidence which sustains the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels. Can we trust the Gospels? Have we the story of Christ which was told by the apostles and personal friends of our Lord, and which was received by the first generation of their disciples? or is it the story of a later age? The primary question, the question of urgent practical importance, is not a *literary* one,—Did Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John write these books? but an *historical* one,—Do these books contain that representation of our Lord, that account of His miracles and teaching, which was given by the men who knew Him, and who, after His death, preached the Christian Faith?

It is often assumed that the literary question—the question of authorship—must be settled, and settled beyond dispute and doubt, before we can be sure that the contents of the Gospels are trustworthy. The principles of a legal trial are applied to this inquiry. It is supposed that we must know who the witnesses are before we can judge of the value of their testimony; that we must be sure of their character; that we must learn whether they had opportunities for knowing the facts; that we must discover whether they are reasonable and cautious persons, or hasty and fanatical.

But this, as I hope to show before these Lectures are finished, is to invert the true order of the inquiry. In the case of the first three Gospels our confidence in their story does not rest on a preliminary demonstration that they were written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were truthful and sagacious men, and had opportunities for knowing the real facts of our Lord's history. I think that the evidence that they wrote these Gospels is *sufficient*; but if it were insufficient, if we had reason to believe that their names were attached to these three narratives on the authority of a doubtful tradition, my confidence in their account of our Lord's life and ministry would not be disturbed. I believe that these three Gospels contain a trustworthy account of our Lord, *whoever may have written them.* I receive their story, not on the uncorroborated testimony of the three men by whom they were written, or by whom it is commonly supposed that they were written, but on the authority of the first generation of Christians, who had learned the Christian Gospel and the earthly history of our Lord from the original apostles and other personal friends of Christ.

In the case of the Fourth Gospel the question of trustworthiness is more deeply implicated in the question of authorship. I believe that the proof — external and internal taken together — of John's authorship is not merely sufficient, but *decisive.* But, even in the case of the Fourth Gospel, the primary and important question is not, Did the Apostle John

write the book? but, Does the book contain in substance the account of our Lord which John was accustomed to give to his disciples? The aim therefore of the following Lectures is to show that the story of the Lord in our Four Gospels is the story which was told by the apostles themselves.

There is no dispute that at the close of the second century these Gospels were received by all Christian Churches as absolutely trustworthy, and as having the authority which belongs to sacred Scriptures: but I shall not take this for granted; I shall offer some illustrations of the evidence on which it rests. From the end of the second century I shall trace back the history of the books and of the story which they contain, until we reach the generation of Christians that received the Christian Gospel from the original apostles.

It will not, I fear, be very easy to present the argument in a form that will be always and immediately intelligible to an audience unfamiliar with these inquiries and unfamiliar with the history of the Christian Church in the second century; I shall be able to state only a part of the historical evidence by which the trustworthiness of the Gospels is sustained; other lines of evidence, some of which cannot be conclusive except to scholars, must be wholly set aside. I will do what I can.

But I may be told that, even when I have proved that the story is the story which was told by Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, and Philip, and

Matthew, and the other apostles of Christ, I have not made my position secure. Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Matthew, and the rest, were they men to be trusted? For myself I do not care to vindicate their integrity and trustworthiness; but if the Four Gospels contain the story which they told of the Master whom they worshipped, their integrity is apparent, and their trustworthiness needs no vindication. And as I am fully convinced that they told this story, I believe that our Lord delivered the Sermon on the Mount and the great discourse in the upper room in Jerusalem; and that He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb, raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain, and called Lazarus from the grave after he had been dead four days.

I.

But there is a preliminary question to be considered: *How are we to approach the consideration of the evidence that the Four Gospels contain the story of our Lord which was told by His apostles and friends?* The answer to that question may determine the issue of the whole investigation; one answer to it would, for all practical purposes, make the investigation irrelevant and unnecessary.

Let me explain what I mean. Of all recent theories assailing the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels, those of Strauss and of Ferdinand Baur are the most famous. Strauss does not begin by

inquiring into the strength of the evidence by which the Christian story is supported; he denies that any evidence can make it credible. Miracles, he says, are impossible; the Gospels attribute miracles to our Lord Jesus Christ · therefore the Gospels cannot be historically trustworthy. His examination of the evidence for the early date of the Gospels is extremely slight. His main business was, not to discover whether there is evidence that the story is true, but to account for its origin, supposing it to be false. When he published the first edition of his *Life of Jesus*, he was unwilling to attribute the story to deliberate invention; he thought that he could explain how myths and legends about Jesus of Nazareth were likely to spring up spontaneously in the fervent imagination and vehement devotion of the second and third generations of His disciples; and he believed that these mythical and legendary narratives were regarded by the unknown authors of the Four Gospels as trustworthy traditions of our Lord's earthly history.

The object of Strauss was to account for the origin of the *story*. In the judgment of Ferdinand Baur, Strauss's theory did not account for the *books* which contain the story. It failed to account for the books which bear the names of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It failed still more flagrantly to account for the Gospel of John. That Gospel cannot be treated as a collection of mythical narratives which had sprung up spontaneously among devout and fervent Christian

people. It is a theological treatise, with a regular plan and definite dogmatic purposes. According to Baur, it represents a certain "tendency" of thought; and he therefore assigns it to a time, late in the second century, when, as he thinks, it was natural that a Gospel with such a "tendency" should have been written. He distributes dates to the other three Gospels on the same principle. He thinks that, while the Gospels embody many popular traditions of Christ, to which the imagination and devotion of the Church had given a miraculous character, the four unknown writers felt themselves free to invent additional miracles in order to add to the force and impressiveness of their narratives. They felt themselves equally free to invent discourses which would support certain theological and controversial positions, and to attribute them to our Lord.

It is sometimes said that Christian men enter on the investigation of the evidence for the authority of the writings of the New Testament with their minds already made up, because these writings are the foundation of their faith. I have tried to show that, whether or not the New Testament writings can be proved to be trustworthy on historical grounds, our faith in Christ remains unshaken. But the charge may be retorted on the assailants of traditional beliefs. Strauss begins his *Life of Jesus* with the dogma—a dogma for which he offers no proof, and for which, as far as I know, nothing of the nature of proof has ever been offered—that miracles are impos-

sible. His conclusion is therefore reached before the inquiry is begun. The verdict is given before a witness is called. Baur's conception of the history of the rise of the Christian Church rests on the assumption that miracles lie outside the limits of history, and that the origin of the Christian faith is to be accounted for without inquiring into the reality of the miracles attributed to our Lord, or even into the reality of our Lord's resurrection.

If we are to begin our investigation with these assumptions, the investigation has a purely academical interest. Assume that the story cannot be true, and no practical end is to be attained by inquiring whether our Gospels contain the story which was told by the original apostles of our Lord.

Nor are we likely to reach any satisfactory conclusion if we isolate the story from the preceding history of the Jewish race to which our Lord Jesus Christ belonged, or from the history of the Christian Faith, of which He was the Founder. In other words, we ought to take into account *all* the facts that have any real bearing on our investigation. But through mere inconsiderateness, our Lord's earthly history is often torn away from great masses of facts in which it is embedded, and to which it organically belongs.

Many people seem to suppose that they may approach the subject as if the Lord Jesus Christ had appeared in Spain or in China, instead of in Judæa and Galilee, and as if after His crucifixion and alleged

resurrection no great changes had taken place in the religious thought and life of mankind. They seem to suppose that the whole proof of the trustworthiness of the Four Gospels has been exhausted when they have gone through certain quotations from Christian and heretical writers belonging to the second century. They isolate our Lord's earthly life from all that preceded it and from all that has followed it. They treat it as though it were wholly sporadic. This is contrary to sound historical principles. The story *fits in* with known facts. It is rooted in a great antecedent history. Its supernatural elements are vitally related to the actual order of the world, and are necessary to account for some of the greatest events in the subsequent history of mankind.

I shall now state some of the more obvious considerations which, as I think, should be present to our mind when we enter on this inquiry.

II.

We are separated from the Lord Jesus Christ by more than eighteen hundred years. There is no doubt that this vast interval creates many difficulties in the way of ascertaining with certainty whether the story of His life which has come down to us is trustworthy. We cannot deal with it, and with the evidence which may be alleged for it, as if we were living at the close of the second century or the beginning of the third. Early Christian writings, containing materials of great importance in relation

to this inquiry, are known to us only by extracts and allusions. Others have wholly disappeared. Further, in the time of Irenæus, of Tertullian, and of Clement of Alexandria, the force of the tradition of Christ was still strong. Great masses of evidence, by which *they* were assured that the Four Gospels contained a true account of our Lord, are irrecoverably lost. It is impossible for us to place ourselves in the position of those who were living so near to the apostolic age.

But if much has been lost, much has been gained. We approach this inquiry through those great achievements of the Christian Faith which extend over the intervening centuries. We know the power which it has exerted over the religious, ethical, and intellectual life of the most highly civilized nations in the world. It has given them august conceptions of God. It has exalted their conception of the dignity of man. It has rescued from neglect and dishonour some of the most gracious and beautiful of human virtues; it has allied the awful and tender sanctions of religion with the common duties of morality. It has given fire and dignity to literature and art. It has inspired a heroism of devotion to the service of the sick, the miserable, and the fallen. It has created in saints a passion for holiness. Through century after century, and in many lands, it has disciplined millions of obscure men to honesty, temperance, patience, kindliness, cheerful content-

ment, and all the virtues which contribute to the happiness of private citizens, and to the peace, order, and progress of states. It has consoled men in their sorrows; it has given them hope in death.

These are among the obvious and uncontested effects of the power of the Christian Faith. They should be remembered—they should be taken into account—when we are considering the evidence for the truth of the story which has come down to us of the earthly history of its Founder. What might be incredible if it were told us of another man, who had done nothing to change the fortunes of the world, may be credible of Him. If miracles could do anything to deepen the impression produced by His personal force and by His teaching—anything to confirm the faith, the loyalty, and the courage of His allies and agents in the earliest movements of so immense and beneficent a revolution; if, on the hypothesis that He was more than man—and this has been the faith of His disciples from the very beginning—miracles could contribute anything to the illustration of His superhuman greatness; if, on the hypothesis that He had come to be the Saviour, not merely the teacher, of the human race—and this too has always been part of the very substance of the Christian Gospel—miracles could contribute anything to the illustration of the true nature of His mission: then there were adequate reasons for their occurrence, and they have achieved their purpose.

The power of the miracles attributed to our Lord

was not exhausted in the impression which they are said to have produced on the people who witnessed them; nor, in later ages, has their chief service consisted in the evidence which they offer that He was sent of God. It has been one of the chief glories of the Christian Faith that it has taught men to care for the sick and the suffering. Even in the most corrupt times of the most corrupt Churches, the obligation to relieve all forms of human misery has never been wholly forgotten. It belongs to the very essence of Christian ethics; for a Christian Church to deny it would be as impossible as for a Christian Church to deny the Unity of God or the reality of judgment to come. Nor has the recognition of the obligation been ineffective. Christian men have had a passion of pity for wretchedness, and in every country of Christendom great foundations of charity have been created in obedience to the authority of Christ and in imitation of His example.

"In obedience to the authority of Christ and in imitation of His example." But how is the authority expressed? and in what facts has the example been given? Where has Christendom learnt that it follows Christ by feeding the poor; by building hospitals for the sick, asylums for the aged, for the deaf, the dumb, and the blind; by giving shelter and aid to every description of physical infirmity and misery? Cancel the miracles, and how much remains to account for the great — I might almost say the supreme—place which this duty of showing mercy

to the miserable has held in the thought and life of the Church through all the Christian centuries?

The miracles of Christ have given the law to Christian charity. Thousands of lepers have felt the touch of a kindly hand, and have had their sufferings soothed by human tenderness, because it has been believed that Christ was moved with compassion when He saw the leper of Galilee, and healed him. Millions of hungry men and women and children have been fed, because it has been believed that Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes. Thousands of hospitals and asylums have been built, tens of thousands of Christian men and women have devoted their lives to the service and relief of human misery, because it has been believed that Christ healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb. I cannot refuse to the glorious ministries of Christian charity a place in the consideration of the question whether the miracles attributed to Christ were really wrought by Him. I see that a confident belief that He wrought them has been the inspiration and the law of some of the fairest of those great works in which the characteristic spirit of the Christian Faith has been illustrated. It was worth while to work the miracles; for in every age, and in every land, and in the hearts of a great multitude that no man can number, they have opened fountains of compassion for human suffering. It was worth while to work them; for they are the origin of the relief and consolation which have lessened

the pains and soothed the wretchedness of countless millions of the human race.

III.

There is another very obvious characteristic of the Christian Faith which has a very close relation to this inquiry. Christendom, according to Mr. Emerson, has "dwelt with noxious exaggeration on the Person of Christ." Had Christendom gone further in the "exaggeration" of its devotion to Him, Christendom would have been stronger and nobler. But the criticism points to a fact of infinite significance. In the religion of Christ, Christ is the larger part of the religion. Here the Prophet is greater than the prophecy, the Messenger of God is greater than the message. It has been so from the beginning. Within five-and-twenty or thirty years after His crucifixion He was spoken of by His disciples as being in a high and unique sense the Son of God; and "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" was associated with "the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost" in an apostolic benediction. His disciples believed that His death was a great and critical event in the history of the whole human race: "One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died, and rose again." That conception of His death reveals a conception of His Person which is "dark with excess of light." What must He have been in whose

death the whole race "died," and through whose resurrection the whole race may "live unto God"? His crucifixion was an awful crime: and yet we are "justified by His blood," and through Him we are to be saved from "the wrath," the wrath of the Eternal. And, further, the Saviour of the world is also the Judge of the world; all men are to "be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

This, it may be said, is Paul's conception of Christ; but we have Paul's word for it that, when he had "laid before" James and Peter and John the Gospel that he preached among the Gentiles, they gave him "the right hand of fellowship," and acknowledged that he had been "entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the Gospel of the circumcision"; they preached in substance the same Gospel—Peter to the Jews, Paul to the Gentiles.

The Apocalypse—written only a few years later, and written by the Apostle John, as many of those acknowledge who refuse to accept the Gospels as genuine—contains conceptions of Christ not inferior in majesty. He is coming "with the clouds: and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him." The angels of heaven, and the Church, and the "living creatures," are represented as saying "with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath

been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Nor is this all: "Every created thing which is in the heavens, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion for ever and ever." Christ is "King of kings and Lord of lords." The death of Christ is as wonderful in the Apocalypse as in the Epistles of Paul. The four and twenty elders "sing a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." John, who knew Christ "after the flesh," John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," attributes to Christ a glory as great as that which is attributed to Him by the apostle to whom He appeared "last of all, as unto one born out of due time."

That during His earthly life His disciples did not know how great He was is certain; but is it conceivable that there were no premonitions of the discovery which came to them after His ascension to heaven? The miracles attributed to Him in the Gospel—miracles which He worked in His own power—harmonize with the conception of His transcendent greatness which appears in the Apocalypse of John and in the uncontested Epistles of Paul. They con-

tributed to the foundation on which such a conception might be built. If during His earthly life Christ exerted no greater powers than belong to man, it is hard to understand how His friends were prepared to recognise in Him, when He had returned to the Father, the glory of the eternal Son of God.

IV.

Again: our Lord belonged to a race which had reached a very great and a very noble conception of God. It is unnecessary to discuss contested questions of Old Testament criticism. The Jewish prophets—this is certain—were filled with awe in the presence of the Eternal; they worshipped and feared Him as infinitely great and infinitely glorious; and He was a God in whose righteousness and mercy men might perfectly trust. Their religious faith was the inspiration and the support of a lofty morality. Kings and people were warned that no prayers or sacrifices could shelter them from the anger of Jehovah if they were guilty of injustice, cruelty, and oppression: "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

And for many generations the Jewish people had been expecting the coming of a great Prophet, a

great Prince,—the Servant, the Messenger, the Representative of Jehovah. Our Lord, according to the Four Gospels, claimed to be the Christ of Jewish prophecy and hope; and if the representation of Him given in the Gospels and in the other New Testament writings is true, the prophecy and the hope have been wonderfully fulfilled. He is not indeed the Christ that either the people or the prophets expected; but He is infinitely greater. He is a Prophet whose Divine commission has been acknowledged by great nations for many centuries; a Prince who has commanded in many lands, and for more than sixty generations, an absolute obedience and a passionate loyalty such as were never given during this brief earthly life, and within the boundaries of a single state, to the greatest of earthly sovereigns.

It is extremely remarkable, to say the least, that so singular a hope should have received—or should appear to have received—so singular a fulfilment. It is extremely remarkable that the enduring sovereignty over great nations, which, according to Jewish hope, was to be achieved by their Messiah, has been actually achieved by One of their own race, and achieved in a far loftier form than their prophets had anticipated. It is extremely remarkable that the sovereignty should have fallen to One whose earthly history was wholly unlike what the Jewish people had supposed would be the earthly history of their Messiah—so unlike, that to have constructed the story of Christ, in its substance and its decisive

events, out of the popular expectation would have been impossible. And what, for our present purpose, is most remarkable of all, is that the story as told in the Gospels, including the manifestation of our Lord's miraculous power, forms a perfect transition from the ancient hope of the Jewish people to its transcendent accomplishment in the present glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

V.

It is my contention that these considerations cannot be reasonably disregarded in our judgment on the evidence for the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels. The main objection—I might say the only objection—to their trustworthiness rests on the miraculous events which they record. In judging whether it is possible and probable that the miracles were wrought, we are bound to take into account the whole of the Christian case.

Hardly any conceivable strength of testimony would convince us that miracles were wrought in England three or four hundred years ago by a man who was remembered only by the miracles that were attributed to him. If it were affirmed, even by contemporary witnesses whose good faith we had no reason to doubt, that such a man had healed the sick, given sight to the blind, raised the dead—a man in whose personality and character and life, so far as they were known to us from the narratives which recorded his miraculous works, there was nothing

wonderful, nothing unique, nothing that created the irresistible impression that he was nearer to God than other men; a man who had originated no great reformation in the moral and religious condition of mankind, had given to the race no loftier and more affecting conceptions of God, had done nothing to deepen the reverence of men for God's righteousness, nothing to make them the heirs of a larger blessedness in God's love; a man from whom there had come no loftier, more gracious, or more generous ideal of human goodness, no new force to sustain us in duty, no new consolations to soothe us in sorrow; —if, I say, it were affirmed by his friends, men apparently intelligent and truthful, that such a man had worked miracles, their testimony would constitute a curious historical problem, to which we might be unable to find any solution; but it would not command our belief. In this imaginary case the alleged miracles would be sporadic, isolated, not woven into the texture of the actual history of mankind.

According to the Christian case, the miracles of Christ have their place in that history. They belong to the life and work of One who has changed, and changed immeasurably for the better, the moral and religious condition of great nations, and whose power after the lapse of eighteen centuries is still unspent. In the narratives which record the miracles of Christ the miracles are not the most wonderful elements: His teaching, His unique Personality, the Divine perfection revealed under human conditions in His char-

acter and history, are more wonderful still. Finally, His appearance has proved to be the transcendent fulfilment of a great hope which, for many centuries, had been the stay, the strength, and the consolation of the race from which He sprang, a race to which had come an exceptional knowledge of God. That Christ should have worked miracles does not surprise me. It would have surprised me if He had not.

VI.

As for those of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ for ourselves, and who know that He is the living Lord and Saviour of men, the Way to the Father, the Giver of eternal life, our own experience—confirmed by the experience of Christian men of all Churches and all ages—prevents us from finding anything incredible in the miracles which He is alleged to have wrought during His earthly ministry.

If you know for yourselves the living and glorified Christ, if you have found God in Him, if you have entered into the actual and conscious possession of the blessings of the Christian redemption, you will see no reason for doubting the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels, because they declare that, during our Lord's earthly life, He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and raised the dead. "He has done greater things than these," "whereof we all are witnesses."

Strauss began his investigation by assuming that miracles are impossible, and that therefore the

story of the Gospels cannot be trustworthy. We begin the investigation by assuming that miracles are possible, because the living God is greater than the forces of the material universe ; and that, as we know that Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of men, it is probable that, even during the years of His earthly humiliation, gracious works, which God alone could achieve, revealed His transcendent greatness. The assumption that the miracles of Christ are impossible is an assumption absolutely without support ; the assumption that it is probable that He wrought them rests on the personal experience of innumerable Christian men, and on the triumphs and glories of the Christian Faith.

LECTURE VI.

EUSEBIUS.

IN the argument which I propose to submit to you, to show that the story of our Lord contained in our Four Gospels is the story which was told by the original apostles, it may appear at first sight—though this is an error which I hope to remove—that no evidence drawn from writings belonging to the second half of the second century can have any weight. But the whole amount of the Christian literature produced before A.D. 150, apart from the books of the New Testament, seems to have been inconsiderable; and of that which was produced a large part has unfortunately been lost. Enough however remains to give the Gospels solid and secure support.

And the lost books are not wholly unknown to us. Early in the fourth century an eminent scholar, a famous bishop, Eusebius of Cæsarea, wrote a history of the Church from the apostolic age to his own; and in this he gives many extracts from writings which have long disappeared, though copies of some

of them may, perhaps, still lie hidden in Eastern monasteries, and may yet be recovered.

I.

Eusebius was born not much later than A.D. 260. The place of his birth is uncertain ; but he submitted to the Council of Nicæa a confession of faith which he said that he had been taught at Cæsarea when he was a child and while he was a catechumen. His earliest associations were with that city ; there he was baptized ; there he became a presbyter ; there too, soon after A.D. 313, he became bishop ; and he was bishop of Cæsarea at his death A.D. 339 or 340.

In his youth he was the friend of learned men, especially of Pamphilus, a fellow presbyter, who was a passionate disciple of Origen of Alexandria. He had access to great libraries: the library of Pamphilus, which was of extraordinary extent and value ; and the library collected during the first half of the third century by Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem. His industry must have been immense ; he published more than thirty treatises—historical, apologetic, doctrinal, critical, and exegetical, besides orations and sermons. His great position at the Council of Nicæa was due, no doubt, first of all, to the intimacy of his relations with the emperor. He alone of the Eastern prelates could tell what was in the emperor's mind ; "he was the clerk of the imperial closet ; he was the interpreter, the chaplain, the confessor of

Constantine."[1] But he was also "beyond question the most learned man and the most famous living writer in the Church at that time."[2]

Before the meeting of the council he had intervened on behalf of Arius, and had remonstrated with Alexander of Alexandria for deposing him. By the more vehement enemies of Arianism he was regarded with great distrust. When the creed of Cæsarea, which he proposed to the council, had been modified by the introduction into the Nicene Creed of the clauses declaring the Son to be "of the substance of the Father," "begotten not made," and "of the same substance" (*homoousion*) with the Father, Eusebius hesitated whether he should subscribe it. He did not like the new terms; the old creed of his baptism was sufficiently explicit for him; nor did he like the anathema appended to the creed condemning Arianism. But after a day's consideration he signed with the rest, and in a letter to the people of Cæsarea he explained that, "though he would resist to the last any vital change in the traditional creed of his Church, he had nevertheless subscribed to these alterations, when assured of their innocence, to avoid appearing contentious."[3]

The truth seems to be that he was a man tolerant

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[1] STANLEY: *Eastern Church*, p. 102.

[2] LIGHTFOOT: "Eusebius of Cæsarea": *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. ii., p. 312.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 313.

of theological differences, profoundly convinced that neither human language nor human thought can define the mysteries of the eternal life of God; and he was very reluctant to deal hardly with friends of his who had been caught by the bold speculations of Arius. For himself, he held the traditional faith; but he did not see that Arianism cut it up by the roots.

If we were to describe him in the current language of our own times, we should say that he was a Broad Churchman, orthodox, but not inclined to be rigorous in exacting from other men an acceptance of the orthodox definitions; and that in his intellectual temper and habits he was a scholar and literary man, rather than a theologian.

II.

In his time there were seven of the books included in our New Testament about whose apostolic authority the opinion of the Churches was divided; and in writing his *History* Eusebius proposed, as one of his objects, to make some contribution towards a decision of their claims.

The books of the New Testament, as you know, were written by different authors, in different countries, at different times. There are many questions to be asked about them: When were they separated from all other Christian writings and placed in a class by themselves as being the "Sacred Scriptures" of the Christian Faith? By whose authority was the

selection made? On what grounds were some books finally included, others finally rejected? These are subjects which you will find discussed in histories of the New Testament canon.

From such treatises you will learn that, towards the end of the second century, and at least as early as A.D. 185, a unique and sacred authority was attributed to nearly all the writings contained in our New Testament. "The Scriptures are perfect, inasmuch as they were uttered by the Word of God and His Spirit." This is the testimony of Irenæus; and by the Scriptures he means the books of the Old Testament and, with a few inconsiderable exceptions, about which opinion was divided, the books of the New. With these exceptions, our New Testament books had been received by the Christian Church as authoritative and sacred for at least twenty years before the close of the second century; and they were regarded by the Christians of that age with a reverence as deep as our own.

For Christians of the generation to which Irenæus belonged, Christians living in every part of the empire, our Four Gospels—no other "Gospels"—contained the authoritative story of our Lord's Life and the authoritative record of His teaching. Our Acts of the Apostles—no other "Acts"—contained the authoritative history of the early years of the Christian Church. They accepted the Epistles of Paul, which have a place in our own New Testament, the First Epistle of Peter, and the First Epistle of John,

as containing the authoritative teaching of apostles who spoke in the name of Christ.

These books had been separated from all others, not by the decree of a council or in submission to the judgment of a great theologian or bishop, but by the general consent of Christian Churches in every part of the world. The process had been a silent one. No one can tell how the result had been brought about. But it is certain that, about the year A.D. 180, the books which I have enumerated were regarded as "the Christian Scriptures," as books written under Divine inspiration and having Divine authority; and they had their place side by side with the books of the Old Testament.

Concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of James and Jude, the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of John, there was not, in that early age, the same unanimity of judgment. The Apocalypse, which was very generally received at the close of the second century, was regarded with serious distrust in the third. The apostolic origin of some of these seven disputed books was acknowledged by the Churches of one country and denied by the Churches of another. Eminent scholars and bishops differed about them. No attempt was made for a long time to determine the question by authority.[1]

[1] Note A in Appendix.

III.

Eusebius, as I have said, proposed in his *History* to make some contribution towards the settlement of the claims of these disputed books, by showing what use had been made of them in the earlier ages of the Church. He also proposed to record anything interesting that he might discover concerning the books which were universally received by the Church. But he draws a very clear distinction between the way in which he intends to deal with the two classes of writings. He promises that, if he finds in any Church writer a *quotation* from a disputed book, or a *reference* to a disputed book, he will call attention to it. Every such quotation or reference would illustrate the authority which the book held in the judgment of an earlier generation of Christians, and would assist to determine its claims to be included among the Sacred Scriptures. But to give quotations from the undisputed books, and references to them, was unnecessary: the authority of these books was not doubtful, it was universally acknowledged. If however he found in early Christian writers any interesting *statement* or *information*, either about the books which were universally received, or about the other seven, he promises to give it a place in his *History*.

His general principle would not have required him to call attention to any mere *references* to the First Epistle of John or the First Epistle of Peter; their

genuineness had always been acknowledged. But, as a matter of fact, he does call attention to the references to those Epistles which are found in some early writers. "He may have thought," says Dr. Lightfoot, "that this would conduce to a just estimate of the meaning of silence in the case of disputed Epistles, as 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John."[1]

Eusebius was a man of large learning. He had access to some of the best libraries of Christian literature that existed in his time. Many books which are now lost were in his hands. From some of them he gives interesting and important extracts. It was his declared purpose to collect and to record whatever information he found in earlier Christian writers, both concerning the seven disputed books and the books which had secured their place among the sacred books of the Church. He was a fair-minded man, with the instincts and habits of a scholar. But throughout his *History* there is no hint that any uncertainty had ever existed in the Church with regard to the authority of the Four Gospels. There is nothing to suggest that they had first appeared after the death of the men whose names they bear. It is inconceivable that Christian Churches independent of each other, inheriting different traditions, and situated in different countries, would have come to accept these four books as the genuine

[1] *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 47.

writings of Matthew and John, Mark and Luke, if they had appeared for the first time, and without explanation, when Matthew and John, Mark and Luke, had all passed away. And if any explanation of their late appearance had been given, it is also inconceivable that no trace of it should have survived. In the Christian writings which have come down to us there is no hint of any such explanation. If any hint of it had existed in the writings which are now lost, but which Eusebius possessed, he would certainly have told us about it.

IV.

Take the Gospel of John. If a book of such immense theological importance as the Fourth Gospel had appeared, for the first time, thirty, forty, or fifty years after John's death, can we imagine that its claims would have been unchallenged? Would no Church writer have expressed a wish for some account of its history? Would no question have been asked as to the reasons why, if it had really been written by the apostle, it had not been given to the Church thirty, forty, fifty years before? Down to the middle of the second century, and later, there were Christian bishops living in different parts of the world who in their early years had known John or the friends of John: would they not have wanted to learn how it was that a Gospel of which they had never heard had appeared with John's name? And would not the unknown writer who had had the

courage to attribute his fictitious Gospel to the apostle have also had the courage to give some fictitious answer to these inquiries? Would not the miraculous ingenuity which enabled him to write a story of Christ, which during so many centuries has commanded the wonder and awe of mankind, have been equal to the invention of a tale concerning the manner in which the book had been preserved, and the grounds for delaying its publication, which would have had an irresistible fascination and charm, —a tale far too beautiful and too pathetic to have passed out of the memory of the Church?

If any questions about the book had been asked, if any answers had been given, Eusebius would have told us about them; for he promises to mention what has been said by earlier writers concerning the undisputed books as well as about the disputed books. He makes a specific promise to mention what they have said about the Four Gospels.[1] But of any such inquiries as those I have suggested about the Gospel of John, of any such explanation as those inquiries must have drawn out, he says nothing.

V.

That this Gospel would have been received by the Church without controversy, if it had appeared twenty or thirty years after the death of John, is incredible, when we consider the contents of the Gospel itself

[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii., cap. xxiv.

and the controversies by which the Church was harassed throughout the second century. Gnosticism destroyed the power of the Gospel by changing it into a philosophy. By those who were contending earnestly for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," it was regarded with intense hostility. But among the technical words of this formidable heresy are the very words which hold so conspicuous a place in John's Gospel, "Only Begotten," "Life," "Truth," "Grace," "Fulness," "the Word," "Light." Did the Gnostics get these words from John? or did the unknown writer of the Fourth Gospel get them from the Gnostics? The words are just as characteristic of the Gospel attributed to John as of the system taught by Valentinus the Gnostic, though in John they have a different power. Who used them first, the writer of the Fourth Gospel or Valentinus?

If the Fourth Gospel had appeared for the first time at any date after 120 A.D., what chance would it have had of being received by those who were fighting Gnosticism as the deadly foe of the Christian Church? To take a parallel case, suggested by Professor Salmon, of Dublin[1]: suppose that when the controversy of the Reformation was at the hottest, it had been announced that the manuscript of

[1] "You might as well conceive some one who wanted a document to be accepted as authoritative by us Protestants stuffing it with Roman Catholic technical words, transubstantiation, purgatory, and such like."—SALMON: *Historical Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 71 (first edition).

an Epistle of Paul, previously unknown, had just been discovered in some ancient library; suppose that when the manuscript was published, it was found to be full of such words as "transubstantiation," "purgatory," "indulgences," would not every Protestant have rejected it as a forgery? Suppose that the Epistle had been published and accepted as genuine ten, twenty, thirty years before Luther nailed his theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg, would not the outbreak of the Reformation have provoked a fierce controversy concerning its genuineness?

If the Fourth Gospel had appeared as late as 120 A.D., when Gnosticism was becoming very powerful, the Churches which held fast the traditional faith would never have acknowledged its authority. If at that date it had been only recently received as the work of an apostle—received within the previous twenty years, and received on inadequate evidence—its authority would certainly have been challenged, and some trace of the controversy would certainly have survived.

But I repeat that, in the Christian writings of the second century which are in our own hands, there is no trace of any controversy on the genuineness of John's Gospel; and the silence of Eusebius assures us that there was no trace of any controversy on this subject in the Christian writings, now lost, which he found in the library of his friend Pamphilus, or in the library of Bishop Alexander at Jerusalem. The inference seems to me irresistible. There was never

any controversy concerning the genuineness of the Gospel of John because there was never any uncertainty about it; and there was never any uncertainty about it because it was published in John's lifetime, and all John's friends knew that it was his.[1]

[1] It is hardly necessary to say that the argument in this Lecture was suggested by Dr. Lightfoot's remarkable chapter on "The Silence of Eusebius" in his *Essays on a Work entitled "Supernatural Religion"*; and the notes to the lecture indicate how much I am indebted to it. But the argument is not identical with that of Dr. Lightfoot, and I must not make his great name responsible for it.

LECTURE VII.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND TERTULLIAN.

THAT at the close of the second century all Christian Churches received our Four Gospels as the authoritative records of the earthly Life and Ministry of our Lord is not contested by any school of criticism. Nor is it contested that, at that time, these Four Gospels were universally attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. To ourselves this is a fact of immense importance.

I.

For when we look back to the early days of the Christian Faith, to the times when men were still living who had seen and heard the writers of our sacred books, had received the Christian Gospel from their teaching, had known them as their personal friends, had talked with them in private about the miracles of Christ, His discourses, His sufferings, and His resurrection, the distance seems immense. The imagination is oppressed by the intervening centuries. How can we make our way through all the confusions and uncertainties of this vast tract of time? But

of these eighteen hundred years, we can pass over seventeen hundred at a single stride. We have in our hands the writings of Irenæus of Lyons, of Tertullian of Carthage, of Clement and Origen[1] of Alexandria; and they attribute the Four Gospels to the same authors to whom we attribute them; they regard them with the same reverence. Is it possible to believe that this general consent rested on no solid foundations?

Let the question be put in another form, a form suggested by the latest account that has been given of these sacred books by those who deny that they are genuine. At the *close* of the second century these four narratives had secured in all Christian Churches a place as great, as authoritative, as sacred, as that which they hold now: is it possible to believe that they could have won this universal recognition if they had been written by unknown men, in unknown places, at unknown times, during the first half of that

[1] The late Dr. Tregelles, an eminent and most painstaking New Testament scholar, says of Origen, who was born in A.D. 185 and died in A.D. 254: "In his writings he makes such extensive use of the New Testament, that, although a very large number of his works are lost, and many others have come down to us only in defective Latin versions, we can in his extant Greek writings alone (I speak this from actual knowledge and examination) find cited at least two-thirds of the New Testament; so that had such a thing been permitted as that the Gospels and some of the other books should have been lost, we might restore them in a great measure by means of the quotations in Origen." —*Lecture on the Historic Evidence of the Authorship and Transmission of the Books of the New Testament* (1853), p. 14.

same century, and after all the apostles and all who belonged to the first generation of Christians were dead? There are two considerations which make it infinitely improbable: 1, The *wide area* over which, in very early times, Christian Churches were planted; and, 2, Their *mutual independence* of each other.

1. Within thirty years after the death of our Lord there were Churches in Jerusalem, in Cæsarea, in the Syrian Antioch, and in Rome. There were Churches in the heart of Asia Minor and in the great cities on the coast. There were Churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. Our materials for constructing the history of the diffusion of the Christian Faith during the next forty years are inconsiderable; but early in the second century we find that there were large numbers of Christians in the north of Asia Minor. Pliny had been sent into the province by Trajan, and he wrote to the emperor to learn how he is to treat those who are guilty of believing in this strange superstition. The "crime" had continued to spread even while the persecution was going on. If he is still to punish those who persisted in it, he tells the emperor that a great number of persons are in danger of suffering. "For many of all ages and every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also and the open country." Pliny thinks that by a wise policy it may be restrained and corrected. "It is certain," he says, "that the temples, which were almost for-

saken, begin to be more frequented. And the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are everywhere bought up, whereas for some time there were few purchasers." He thinks that many "might be reclaimed if pardon were granted to those who shall repent." That letter was written before A.D. 105. Fifty years later the Christian Gospel had spread so widely, that Justin, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* says, "There exists not a people, whether Greek or barbarian or any other race of men, by whatsoever appellation they may be distinguished, whether they dwell under tents or wander about in covered wagons, among whom prayers are not offered in the name of the crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all things." Gibbon, who quotes the passage, has no doubt a right to call it "a splendid exaggeration, which even at present it would be extremely difficult to reconcile with the real state of mankind"; but Justin would hardly have ventured on so glowing a statement, if it had not been notorious that the new Faith had won great triumphs in many remote parts of the world. Indeed, we know, from other sources, that before the middle of the second century there were Christian Churches in nearly all the provinces of the empire.

2. These Churches were not under any central authority. The Apostle Paul, during his lifetime, maintained a vigilant supervision over the Churches which he had founded in Asia and in Europe; but he died more than thirty years before the end of the

first century. John must have exerted an immense influence over the Churches of Asia Minor, but he died about the beginning of the second century. The age of general councils had not come. As yet the bishop of Rome was not the ruler of Western Christendom. The Churches stood apart. They had friendly relations with each other, but they were not bound together in one great ecclesiastical organization. No theologian, in the second century, rose to the ascendency which belonged to Augustine in the fifth. Ancient Churches, founded by apostles, were regarded with reverence, and the Roman Church had the additional influence derived from its position in the imperial city; but neither Antioch nor Rome had authority over the rest of Christendom. The Churches followed their own traditions; if they modified them, it was in fraternal deference to Churches which they believed had been more faithful to the apostolic rule—not in forced submission to any external authority. Towards the end of the second century there was a sharp controversy between the East and the West on the observance of Easter.

How then are we to explain the fact that, many years before 200 A.D., all these Churches—Churches composed of men of different races, Churches separated from each other by mountains and seas, Churches in Rome and Churches in Asia Minor, Churches in Gaul and Churches in Northern Africa—received the Four Gospels as sacred Scriptures, and believed that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?

I repeat that no great theologian, whose fame extended from the East to the West, drew these remote and independent societies into agreement. Difference of judgment was not suppressed, consent was not compelled by the canon of a council or by the authority of a pope. How came the Churches to agree?

There can, I think, be only one answer to this question. The Gospels must have been written and received before the first generation of Christians had wholly passed away. Had any of them appeared for the first time at a later date, ancient Churches which had been founded by apostles would have refused to acknowledge them. If, here and there, a Church had been deceived, Churches elsewhere would have protested against the fraud. The universal reception of the Gospels before 200 A.D. is a proof that they could not have been written by unknown authors between 100 A.D. and 150 A.D.

II.

From the argument resting on the general consent of the Churches at the close of the second century, I pass to the consideration of the value of the special evidence which is given by two eminent men of that age—Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage. The two men, in their intellectual and religious life, were extremely unlike; and they represent Christian communities having very different characteristics and very different traditions.

The city of Alexandria had long been famous for

its immense Library, the literary glory of the ancient world ; and for its Museum—or, as we should say, its University—in which crowds of students from distant countries listened to illustrious professors whose names have not yet perished. The general population consisted of men of all races, and the Alexandrian schools were hospitable to the learning and speculation of all lands It was there that the bold attempt was made to blend and to fuse Greek and Oriental thought, and to discover in the books of Moses the last and highest results of the philosophy of Paganism. Literature, grammar, criticism ; mathematics, astronomy, medicine—whatever a man cared to study, he could study under great masters and in company with enthusiastic comrades.

As early as the beginning of the second century the number of Christians in the city was very large ; among them Basilides and Valentinus, and other teachers of Gnosticism, found some of their earliest adherents. The Christian Church caught the Alexandrian spirit. Towards the end of the century the great Christian school of Alexandria, the Catechetical School, became the centre of the intellectual assault of the Church on the thought of the pagan world. The school was open from morning to night, without charge, to men and women alike. Where the intellectual life of the world was keenest, most intense, most adventurous, Christian scholars determined with intrepid confidence to demonstrate the transcendent glory of the wisdom revealed to the world in Christ

Nor were their resources unequal to their task. Over this school Clement presided for about thirteen years (A.D. 190–203).

It is probable, though not certain, that he was educated at Athens, which still preserved in the second century some tradition of its ancient intellectual supremacy; and there are expressions of his from which it has been inferred that in his early life he was a heathen. The nobler forms of heathen thought had a strong attraction for him, and it was by no sudden movement that he reached perfect rest in the Christian Faith. For Clement, even when he has become master of the great Christian school at Alexandria, Plato sometimes speaks "as if divinely inspired."[1] He believes that, as God is the Author of all good things, God had given philosophy to the Greeks as He had given the law to the Jews, as a discipline of righteousness, as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. Perhaps too—it was possible—the gift came direct from the Father of all, and by the immediate illumination of the Holy Spirit;[2] or if the philosophers had derived their best knowledge from Hebrew prophets, they were but like Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven for the service of men: the light and fire were from God, by whatsoever means they were obtained.[3]

He was clearly a man of wide and active intel-

[1] *Stromata*, book i., cap. viii.
[2] *Ibid.*, book i., cap. v.
[3] *Ibid.*, book i., cap. xvii.

ligence. His sympathies were generous. We are separated from him by seventeen hundred years; but he often thinks the thoughts which we are inclined to regard as the best results of modern life and speculation. He was a man of large learning;[1] he was an eminent teacher in a learned Church; he lived in a learned city. That such a man, living and teaching within a hundred years after the death of the last of the apostles, received our Four Gospels as authentic and genuine, that he never suspected that they had been written long after the writers to whom they are attributed were dead, is in itself a strong reason for believing that, at the close of the second century, the tradition which supported their genuineness and authenticity was ancient, universal, and decisive.

To give a list of the quotations from the Four Gospels which occur in Clement's writings, in order to prove that he acknowledges their authority, is wholly unnecessary, as unnecessary as it would be to offer similar proof that their authority is acknowledged by Mr. Spurgeon or Canon Liddon. But it may be well to show that he did not accept the authority, either of the Gospels or of the other canonical Scriptures, without inquiry. In a lost

[1] "No heathen contemporary shows such a power of memory or so wide an acquaintance with the classical literature of Greece in all its branches as Clement of Alexandria."—LIGHTFOOT: *Essays on a Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 269.

work of his—*Hypotyposes*—he collected the results of his investigations; some passages have been preserved. In this work, says Eusebius, Clement gives the tradition respecting the order of the Gospels, as derived from the oldest—or original—presbyters. "He says that those which contain the genealogies were written first; but that the Gospel of Mark was occasioned in the following manner: 'When Peter had proclaimed the word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel under the influence of the Spirit, as there was a great number present, they requested Mark, who had followed him from afar, and remembered well what he had said, to reduce these things to writing; and that, after composing the Gospel, he gave it to those who requested it of him, which, when Peter understood, he directly neither hindered nor encouraged it. But John, last of all, perceiving that what had reference to the body in the Gospel of our Saviour" (that is, to the earthly and human side of our Lord's life and work) "was sufficiently detailed, and being encouraged by his familiar friends and urged by the Spirit, he wrote a spiritual Gospel."[1] He disputes the authenticity of a saying attributed to our Lord, because, though it is contained in the Gospel according to the Egyptians—an apocryphal Gospel—it is not to be found in "any of the Four Gospels which have been handed down to us."[2]

[1] EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, book vi., cap. xiv.
[2] *Stromata*, book iii., cap. xiii.

There is another point to be considered in connexion with the testimony of Clement. He tells us that he wrote his *Stromata* as memoranda for his old age, that he might not forget the vigorous and animated discourses which he had heard in early manhood from blessed and truly remarkable men, who had preserved the tradition of the Faith derived directly from the holy apostles Peter, James, John, and Paul. It was God's will, he says, that the truth should be transmitted from its original teachers as from father to son, though few of the sons were equal to their fathers. He had met the men from whom he had received the tradition in Greece, in Italy, and in the East. One was from Egypt; another was a Christian Jew whom he found in Palestine; another was born in Assyria; another, the greatest of them all—probably Pantænus—he found in Egypt; and it was when he found the last that his mind and heart reached their final rest in Christ. Through channels so various the beliefs of an earlier generation had reached him. It is hard to imagine that men who represented countries so remote, and lines of tradition which for two or three generations had been independent of each other, could have agreed to treat the Gospels as having been written by the authors whose names they bear, if these names had been attributed to forgeries produced long after the apostles and all their contemporaries had passed away.

III.

From Alexandria we pass to another great African city. The city of Carthage, after its restoration under Cæsar and Augustus, rose with extraordinary rapidity to great wealth and splendour. It was inhabited by a mixed population, composed, partly, of the descendants of the ancient Phœnician settlers, who in early times had raised their republic to a greatness which disputed the power of Rome; partly of Roman colonists; partly of strangers from many lands, drawn to the city by its immense commercial prosperity. The external forms of its civilization were derived from Rome. It became famous for its schools of rhetoric and of Roman law. But in the religious faith of the people there were deep traces of the Phœnician origin of the ancient Carthage, and their temper was as fierce as the heat of the African deserts.

The Carthaginian Church shared the intellectual and moral characteristics of the city. Intellectually it was Roman, not Oriental; practical, not speculative. Its temper was rigid and intolerant. It was capable of the most violent and passionate enthusiasm; and, in the person of its sterner sons, capable, too, of an heroic fidelity to Christ under prolonged and cruel sufferings. But when times of persecution came, many of its fanatical members proved inferior in constancy and fortitude to Christian men in other Churches, who were less ostentatious in

their professions of devotion to the Faith, and less intolerant in their denunciations of heathenism.

Of the strength and the limitations of this great Church Tertullian is the most illustrious representative. He was born in Carthage between 150 and 160 A.D. He belonged to a good family, and received an excellent education. Philosophy, history, rhetoric, and law were the subjects which had the strongest attractions for him. His parents were heathen, and he was more than thirty years of age—perhaps forty—when he received the Christian Gospel. He soon gave proof of the vehemence of his zeal and the energy and fertility of his intellect; fifteen or sixteen of his books—some of them apologetic, others controversial, others moral and ascetic—were written within seven years after his conversion.

Even these early writings were marked by great moral austerity. According to Tertullian, it was a crime for a Christian man to give any sanction, direct or indirect, to idolatry; for idolatry is the supreme sin, and includes all others: it is murder, adultery, blasphemy. It was therefore a crime to witness the performances in the theatre and the circus, for all public amusements were associated with honours paid to the gods. It was a crime to have friendly relations with people who were in the habit of witnessing these performances. To share in the observance of the holy days of the heathen was also a crime. On some of these days it was a national custom to pay debts; on others to give

presents; Tertullian contended that a Christian man should carefully avoid conforming to the custom; let him pay his debts and give his presents on days which were not devoted to the gods. To manufacture idols or to sell them was, of course, a crime. To traffic in any articles used in heathen worship was a crime. Magistrates had to discharge certain functions in relation to heathen temples; a Christian man could not therefore be a magistrate. Schoolmasters had to teach their scholars the heathen mythology, and to take part in school festivals which were held in honour of the gods; the very first payment of every pupil they consecrated to the honour of Minerva. To be a schoolmaster was therefore not consistent with loyalty to Christ.[1]

It is apparent from the tone and temper of Tertullian's denunciations that there were large numbers of baptized persons in Carthage who listened to this stern teaching either with indifference or with resentment. When he reached middle life he turned in despair from what he regarded as the hopeless cor-

[1] But Tertullian was obliged to admit that Christians could not dispense with that general culture which was needful both for the study of the Scriptures and the intercourse of daily life. He therefore sanctioned the attendance of Christian children at heathen schools, if they could obtain a literary education in no other way; and he trusted to the influence of the Church and the home to protect them against the contagion of heathenism. The scholars could avoid taking part in heathen festivals more easily than the teachers. See NEANDER: *Antignostikus*, part i., section 1.

ruption of the catholic Church—the luxury, covetousness, cowardice, worldliness of both its clergy and laity—and trusted that he had found among the Montanists the lost ideal of the perfect life.

From this time his moral teaching became still more austere. The Christians in Carthage were menaced with persecution. Was it lawful to escape persecution by flight? To Tertullian, who believed that the voice of the Spirit was heard through the prophets of Montanism, the answer was clear; for the prophets incited men to offer themselves for martyrdom. "Why," they asked, "should you be ashamed of gaining glory? The opportunity is offered you when you are in peril of suffering for the name of Christ. He who is not exposed to dishonour before men will be exposed to dishonour before the Lord. Seek not to die on your beds from disease, but to die the martyr's death, that He may be glorified who suffered for you." The soul of Tertullian vibrated to that iron string. "More glorious," he exclaims, "is the soldier pierced with the javelin in battle than he who has a safe skin as a fugitive." To purchase safety with money was as shameful as to flee. The Christian man had been ransomed by Christ from the spirits of wickedness, from the darkness of this life, from eternal judgment, from everlasting death; "but *you* bargain for him with an informer, or a soldier, or some paltry thief of a ruler—under, as they say, the folds of the tunic[1]—as

[1] He means that the negotiation was clandestine.

if *he* were stolen goods whom Christ purchased in the face of the whole world—yes, and set at liberty." No doubt Christ had said to the apostles that, when they were persecuted in one city, they were to flee to another; but they were to flee, not to insure their own safety, but because the work they had to do was urgent and the time was short: "ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."

The same austerity and sternness that he showed in his discussion of Christian ethics, and in his denunciations of clergy and laity who lived by a less severe rule than his own, appear in his treatment of heathenism. He hates it, scorns it, assaults it with incessant sarcasm and invective. In his *Apology*, which is one of his earliest writings, there are many characteristic passages. The heathen, he says, falsely charged the Christian with shameful crimes. I will show you, retorts Tertullian, that practices, open or secret, prevail among yourselves, which perhaps have rendered it possible for you to believe that similar enormities are committed by us. You attribute to your gods the most horrible offences; and those who worship them do the same things. He recites with a fierce fidelity the deeds of cruelty and of lust, which he declares were common in heathen nations. And he adds, with bitter irony, that human goodness was an insult to the divinities. "Deify your vilest criminals, if you wish to please your gods."

Clement of Alexandria was eager to find in heathen thought anticipations of the Christian Gospel; he looked into the abysses of heathen darkness with the hope of discovering some rays, however faint, of the "light which lighteth every man." Tertullian poured upon heathenism a fiery stream of insult and hatred. The contrast between the two men is complete. In their temperament and in their methods of thought they were as far from each other as the east is from the west. But they were agreed in their reverence for the Four Gospels.

On what ground Tertullian rested his belief in their authority is shown in the following passage, taken from his treatise against Marcion:

"If it is acknowledged that that is more true which is more ancient, that more ancient which is even from the beginning, that from the beginning which is from the apostles, it will in like manner assuredly be acknowledged that that has been derived by tradition from the apostles which has been preserved inviolate in the Churches of the apostles. Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from Paul; to what rule the Galatians were recalled by his reproofs; what is read by the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians; what is the testimony of the Romans, who are nearest to us, to whom Peter and Paul left the Gospel, and that sealed by their own blood. We have, moreover, Churches founded by John. For even if Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, still the succession of bishops [in the seven Churches], if traced to its source, will rest on the authority of John. And the noble descent of other Churches is recognised in the same manner. I say then that among them, and not only among the apostolic Churches, but among all the Churches which are united with them in Christian fellowship, that Gospel of Luke which we earnestly defend has been maintained from its first publication."

"The same authority of the apostolic Churches will uphold the other Gospels which we have in due succession through them and according to their usage, I mean those of [the apostles] Matthew and John ; although that which was published by Mark may also be maintained to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was : for the narrative of Luke also is generally ascribed to Paul, [since] it is allowable that that which scholars publish should be regarded as their master's work." [1]

Tertullian's contention is reasonable. The Churches which apostles had founded preserved the writings of their apostolic founders. The Churches of Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus preserved Paul's Epistles to the first generation of Christians in those cities. The Epistle to the Galatians, full of sharp rebuke to the men who received the Gospel of Paul with such enthusiasm that they would have plucked out their eyes for him, but who within a year or two were listening to "another Gospel," which was not a Gospel at all, was preserved by the Churches of Galatia. The Roman Church preserved Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The Churches founded by John preserved the writings of John. All the Four Gospels—and especially the Gospel of Luke, with which in his controversy with Marcion Tertullian was more immediately concerned—had been handed down in the same way. The sacred books were in the keeping of organized societies, whose members regarded them as the authoritative records of a Divine revelation—

[1] *Against Marcion*, iv. 5, Dr. Westcott's translation : *Canon of New Testament*, pp. 345, 346.

a revelation which was the law of their earthly conduct and the foundation of their immortal hopes. It is irrelevant to say that Tertullian, though a man of powerful intellect, had no faculty for literary criticism. Our contention is, not that he was a great literary critic, and that therefore we ought to accept his judgment on the authority and genuineness of the Four Gospels, but that he is a witness to the great place in the thought and the life of the Church which the Gospels held before the close of the second century. For this fact the evidence contained in his writings is decisive.[1]

[1] *See* Appendix, Note B.

LECTURE VIII.

IRENÆUS.

UNDER the reign of Marcus Aurelius—a philosopher among emperors, a saint among philosophers—the Christians suffered cruel persecution. The general policy of Rome was a policy of religious toleration; for, to quote the famous sentence of Gibbon, "the various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful." But from this toleration the Christian Faith, which maintained an incessant and open war against all the religions of the empire, was not unnaturally excluded. The hatred with which it was regarded was not always active, but it never ceased to exist. Under Marcus Aurelius it became furious.

He was one of the greatest and noblest of princes. He accepted the imperial dignity with reluctance, and cared nothing for the splendours of his great position. Could he have chosen for himself, he would have spent his years in meditation on the mystery and glory of human life and on the ideal of human virtue.

But the sentence of Plato was always on his lips, that states would be great and prosperous if their philosophers were princes, or if their princes were philosophers; and he trusted that his own philosophical discipline had qualified him to render service to the immense populations which were under the Roman power.

The precepts which he set down for the conduct of his own life show that he saw the moral perils of his great position. "Take care," he writes, "that thou art not made into a Cæsar, that thou art not dyed with this dye; for such things happen. Keep thyself then simple, good, pure, serious, free from affectation, a friend of justice, a worshipper of the gods, kind, affectionate, strenuous in all proper acts. Strive to continue to be such as philosophy wished to make thee. Reverence the gods and help men. Short is life. There is only one fruit of this earthly life, a pious disposition and social acts. Do everything as a disciple of Antoninus. Remember his constancy in every act which was conformable to reason, . . . and his sweetness, and his disregard of earthly fame, and his efforts to understand things; . . . and how he bore with them that blamed him unjustly without blaming them in return, how he did nothing in a hurry, and how he listened not to calumnies; . . . and with how little he was satisfied, such as lodging, bed, dress, food, servants; and how laborious [he was] and patient; . . . and how he tolerated freedom of speech in those who opposed

his opinions ; and the pleasure that he had when any man showed him anything better ; and how religious he was without superstition. Imitate all this, that thou mayest have as good a conscience when thy last hour comes as he had."[1] His *Meditations*, which were written during his campaign on the Danube, sometimes touch the very confines of the morality illustrated in the Sermon on the Mount. Surely his vision of an ideal goodness was revealed to him by light from God. His personal character was not unworthy of his precepts. He was laborious, courageous, upright, kindly, and magnanimous. And yet he persecuted the Christians.

To what extent he was personally responsible for the severities inflicted upon them has been disputed. During his reign the empire suffered grave calamities, and was menaced with still graver dangers. The public mind was agitated and alarmed. What were the causes of the earthquakes, pestilences, famines, which filled the Roman world with distress? By what invisible and hostile powers had the barbarians on the frontiers been excited to revolt? Was it possible that the gods were angry because the Christians had forsaken their temples, and were speaking of the ancient worship with fierce contempt? Popular terror may have demanded that the adherents of the new superstition should be sacrificed as a propitiation

[1] *The Thoughts of the Emperor M. Aurelius*, translated by George Long, pp. 123, 124.

to the offended deities ; and the emperor may have believed that it would be imprudent, perhaps impossible, to interfere for their protection. The Christians had suffered under Antoninus, whom he venerated as an example of philosophic virtue ; and as the Christians were charged, not only with atheism, but with committing in secret the most horrible crimes, he may have thought that they deserved to die. It is probable that he regarded with apprehension the political effects of this strange superstition ; common worship was one of the strongest securities of the unity of the State ; there was disloyalty to the empire in the refusal to take part in the public religious ceremonies. Whatever may be the explanation of his policy, "during the whole course of his reign," to quote the characteristic words of Gibbon, "Marcus despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign."

I.

The persecution in southern Gaul (A.D. 177) seems to have begun in a tumultuous outbreak of popular passion. The general hatred with which the Christians were regarded had, for some unknown reasons, become so fierce, that their presence was not tolerated in the baths, the markets, or the public streets. When they appeared they were violently and brutally attacked ; they were stoned and robbed. To bring the disorder to an end the local authorities intervened, and gave orders that the Christians should

be imprisoned, and that on the arrival of the governor of the province they should be put on their trial. A letter from "the servants of Christ dwelling in Lyons and Vienne in Gaul" to their "brethren in Asia and Phrygia" tells the story of the sufferings which the martyrs endured, first from the fury of the mob, and afterwards from the severities of the law. Nearly all the more zealous members of the two Churches were seized. To subdue their courage they were subjected to intolerable tortures. They were cruelly scourged. Some were compelled to sit on chairs of burning iron. Many died from the horrible treatment inflicted on them in prison. There were some whose constancy gave way under these persistent torments; but most of them showed a glorious fidelity. Those who declared their Roman citizenship were beheaded. The rest were flung to the wild beasts at the public games.

Among the martyrs that died in prison was Pothinus, bishop of Lyons. He was more than ninety years old, and was very infirm, partly from his great age, partly from disease. As he was being dragged away from the public tribunal, the crowd through which he passed struck him and kicked him, "showing no reverence to his age"; those who could not reach him flung at him whatever they had in their hands, to avenge the injuries which he had done to their gods. The old man's strength was exhausted, and in two days he died.

Irenæus, a presbyter in the Church at Lyons, was

elected his successor. He was a native of Asia Minor, and in his youth had lived in Smyrna, and had known Polycarp. Between the Churches of Asia Minor and the Churches in southern Gaul the relations were very intimate. It was from Asia Minor, in all probability, that Lyons and Vienne had received the Christian Gospel; and the Churches in Asia Minor would listen to the story of the courage and fidelity of the Christian martyrs in these two cities with the same kind of interest and gratitude and enthusiasm with which the Congregational Churches of England, thirty or forty years ago, listened to the story of the courage and fidelity of the Christian martyrs of Madagascar, who had first heard of the grace and glory of Christ from the lips of Congregational missionaries.

Even as a presbyter of the Church, Irenæus must have been a man of some distinction. In the early days of the persecution, his brethren, who were suffering for their own faith, sent him to Rome to appeal to the sympathy of Eleutherus, at that time bishop of Rome, on behalf of the Montanists, who were suffering persecution in Asia Minor and Phrygia. When Irenæus became bishop, after the martyrdom of Pothinus, he showed great vigour. He was zealous for the conversion of the heathen; he was a resolute assailant of heresy; and he took an active part in the more important ecclesiastical affairs of his time.

II.

His great work was a controversial treatise against Gnosticism, which was written in the early years of his episcopate, probably between A.D. 180 and A.D. 185. It is usually quoted under the short title, *Against Heresies.* He uses the books of the New Testament as freely as any modern theologian, and with the same reverence for their authority.

One of his testimonies to the Four Gospels I must give at length. He says:

"So firm is the ground on which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and, starting from these [documents], each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine. For the Ebionites, who use Matthew's Gospel only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord. But Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those [passages] which he still retains. Those again who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible, but that it was Jesus who suffered, preferring the Gospel of Mark, if they read it with a love of truth may have their errors rectified. Those, moreover, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John, . . . shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel. . . . Since then our opponents do bear testimony to us, and make use of these [documents], our proof derived from them is firm and true.

"It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the 'pillar and ground' of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh. From which

fact it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating His manifestation, 'Thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth.' For the cherubim too were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God." [1]

The testimony to the Four Gospels in this passage and in other parts of the writings of Irenæus is something very much more than the expression of the private opinion of a single Christian writer. He is expressing what he assumes to be the general judgment of those Christian Churches which claimed to inherit the apostolic faith. One heretical sect might appeal in support of its heresies to the Gospel of Matthew, another to the Gospel of Mark, another to the Gospel of Luke, another to the Gospel of John; one of the sects might mutilate one Gospel, and another another: the Churches which were faithful to the apostolic tradition acknowledged the authority of all the Four, and had preserved them unmutilated. Irenæus was bishop of Lyons; he had a right to speak for the Churches of southern Gaul. He had recently been sent on an important mission to Rome; he must have known whether or not the Roman Church regarded all the Four Gospels with reverence, and believed that they were written by the

[1] IRENÆUS: *Against Heresies* ("Ante-Nicene Library"), vol. i., pp. 292, 293.

men whose names they bear. He was born in Asia Minor, and there were intimate relations between the Churches of Asia Minor and the Churches of Gaul; he had a right to speak for Asia Minor. His testimony is the testimony of the Churches of Asia Minor, Rome, and southern Gaul. In the year A.D. 185, all these Churches held that our Four Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This, indeed, is not disputed.

III.

It has been alleged that the fanciful arguments by which Irenæus attempts to prove that there must be Four Gospels, and that there cannot be more than Four, deprive his testimony of all value. What weight, it has been asked, can be attached to a man's critical judgment who contends that, because there are four zones of the world, and because there are four principal winds, the north, the south, the east, and the west, and because there are four cherubim, there must be four authoritative narratives of the life of our Lord, and no more? But the question has nothing to do with the critical judgment of Irenæus. The worth of his testimony does not rest upon his personal competence to determine whether the Four Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but upon the opportunities which he had for knowing that this was the general belief of the Church in his time, and had been the general belief of the Church as long as he could remember.

He was an able man and a learned man; but, like other able and learned men of those days, he found parables and mysterious symbols where we find none. His logic, though often solid, is sometimes fanciful. But the mystical reasons which he alleges for there being Four Gospels, and only four, instead of lessening the force of his testimony, add immensely to its strength. Religious veneration, such as that with which he regarded these books, is of slow growth. They must have held a great place in the Church as far back as the memory of living men extended. They must have been transmitted to him and his contemporaries as a sacred treasure by the preceding generation.

IV.

Further: Irenæus, as I have said, came from Asia Minor, and it was in Asia Minor that the Apostle John, who died about A.D. 100, had spent his last years. In A.D. 185 there must have been men still living in Smyrna and in Ephesus who had known intimately some of John's personal disciples and friends. Indeed, Irenæus himself, in his early youth, had listened to the teaching of Polycarp, and Polycarp had had "intercourse with John" and with others "who had seen the Lord." There are several references to Polycarp in the great work of Irenæus on the *Heresies*, but the most interesting and instructive reference to him is in a remonstrance which he addressed to Florinus, who was one of his early

friends, but had lapsed into heresy.[1] After saying that the present opinions of Florinus were not those which had been handed down to him by "the elders before us, who also were disciples of the apostles," Irenæus proceeds:

"For I saw thee, when I was still a boy in Lower Asia, in company with Polycarp, while thou wast faring prosperously in the royal court, and endeavouring to stand well with him. For I distinctly remember the incidents of that time better than events of recent occurrence; for the lessons received in childhood, growing with the growth of the soul, become identified with it; so that I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures. To these [discourses] I used to listen at the time with attention, by God's mercy which was bestowed upon me, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart; and by the grace of God I constantly ruminate upon them faithfully."

We can imagine Irenæus—presbyter, bishop, of Lyons—walking slowly and in deep meditation on the banks of the Rhone, and thinking of his early years when he listened to Polycarp in Smyrna. The

[1] The passage has been preserved by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, book v. 20. The translation given in the text is by Dr. Lightfoot, and appears in his *Essays on the Work Entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* pp. 96, 97.

face, the form, the voice of the saintly man who had died a martyr for Christ's sake came back to him. He could recall the reverence with which he had heard him speak of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and of other friends of the Lord whom he had known. The miracles of Christ which Polycarp had heard John describe, the discourses of Christ which Polycarp had heard John repeat, Polycarp's recollections of John's expositions of our Lord's words, Polycarp's accounts of what had been told him by other men who had been the friends of Christ during His earthly history—all these were to Irenæus a most precious and an imperishable possession. Those were his student days.[1] It was then that he was preparing for his work as presbyter and bishop. What he had heard from Polycarp was a sacred trust; he was under solemn obligations to be faithful to it.

Is it probable, is it possible, that Irenæus would have acknowledged the genuineness and authority of a Gospel said to have been written by John if he had never heard Polycarp speak of it? It is certain that, when he heard Polycarp, John had been dead for many years; if at that time Polycarp, John's disciple, had known nothing of any Gospel that John had

[1] Irenæus says he was a "boy" when he heard Polycarp; he does not mean that he was a mere child. Mr. Venables, in his article on Irenæus in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iii., p. 254, cols. 1, 2, argues that the age of a "boy"—as Irenæus uses the word—began about the eighteenth year.

written, had never spoken of it, I cannot believe that Irenæus would ever have been induced to receive the Fourth Gospel as having been written by Polycarp's master and friend.

V.

Irenæus had received traditions concerning our Lord from other "elders" who had known the original apostles. He had also received traditions from some who had been the friends of men who had known the original apostles. These traditions are indeed not always trustworthy. Some of the "elders" whom Irenæus knew or from whom he quotes may have misunderstood what they heard from an apostle or from a friend of an apostle; or may, in later years, have confused what they heard with their own inferences from it.

Even Polycarp's recollection of the precise words which he had heard from John might not always have been perfectly accurate; he might have mistaken their meaning when he first heard them; with the lapse of years phrases, sentences, lodged in his memory might have been moulded into new forms by the ebb and flow of his own thoughts, as stones lying on the beach are rounded and polished by the ebb and flow of the tide. Traditions of what the apostles *said*, even when they are reported by men who were the immediate disciples of the apostles, cannot command an unqualified confidence. They require collateral support. Still less can they com-

mand an unqualified confidence when they are reported by men who did not themselves hear the apostles, although the tradition may have come to them from men whose intercourse with the apostles had been intimate and had extended over many years. But, if the question at issue is whether a Gospel bearing the name of John contains an account of our Lord, identical in substance with that which John was accustomed to give to his disciples, then the evidence of the disciples of John and of their disciples is of great and irresistible strength. If they accept the Gospel, if they offer no protest against its genuineness, I, for my part, am compelled to believe that he wrote it.

And this is the real question at issue. For those who contest the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel assert that it contains an account of our Lord wholly different from that which John would have given had he written a Gospel at all; that its conception of Jesus of Nazareth, as the eternal Word who had become flesh to reveal the Father and to save the world, is rooted in philosophical speculations on the nature and being of God, wholly alien from the thought of the fisherman of Galilee, who was an unlearned man; that its spiritual freedom is inconsistent with the religious position of John, who was an apostle of the circumcision, and who, it is maintained, regarded Paul's revolt against Judaism with stern hostility; that what are described as the simple ethical discourses contained in the first three Gospels

represent the real character of our Lord's teaching, and that therefore none of His original apostles could have attributed to Him the mystical and dogmatic discourses contained in the fourth. In other words, it is contended, not only that John did not write the Gospel which bears his name, but that he could not have written it, since it contains a theory of our Lord's Person and an account of our Lord's teaching such as John himself could never have given to his disciples.

The theory is an impossible one. If the representation of our Lord and of our Lord's teaching in the Fourth Gospel had been wholly different from that which John had given during his lifetime, neither John's friends nor the disciples of John's friends would have allowed it to have been accepted as genuine.

Suppose that Dr. Pusey had never published any books, or tracts, or sermons during his life, but had taught his characteristic doctrines concerning the Church, the Priesthood, and the Sacraments to successive generations of Oxford students. He died in 1882. Suppose that early in the next century, twenty years after his death, or even thirty or forty, a treatise were to appear, bearing his name, which assailed with elaborate argument the whole theory of Episcopacy, and maintained that every separate congregation of devout men and women is, according to the idea of Christ, a true Church, under Christ's immediate government, and with powers derived from

Christ's presence to appoint its own ministers and to exercise discipline; suppose that this treatise, attributed to Dr. Pusey, contained a vigorous attack on the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration and the Real Presence in the Eucharist, and defended the Zuinglian theory of the Sacraments: is it credible that, while men were still living who had been Dr. Pusey's students at Oxford, this treatise would be received as genuine? is it credible that it would be received as genuine while men were still living who had derived their ecclesiastical and sacramental beliefs from Dr. Pusey's students? Would there be no protest, no controversy?

But the theory which denies that John could have written the Fourth Gospel requires us to believe something quite as incredible. For, according to this theory, the doctrinal teaching of the Fourth Gospel is as irreconcilable with what it is alleged the doctrinal teaching of John must have been, as the ecclesiastical and sacramental teaching of the imaginary treatise, published after Dr. Pusey's death, with Dr. Pusey's ecclesiastical and sacramental teaching during his life. And yet there is no trace of any protest against the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel on the part of the men who had known John for many years and who had loved and reverenced him; and it is certain that scholars and bishops who were the friends of John's friends, and had received from them the tradition of his sanctity and of his teaching, believed that the Fourth Gospel contains an authentic

account of our Lord's ministry, and that John wrote it. For me this, at least, is absolutely certain, that the representation of our Lord and of His teaching given in the Fourth Gospel is identical in substance with that which the Churches of Asia had heard from John's own lips.

LECTURE IX.

TATIAN.

I.

IN his *Address to the Greeks*, Tatian tells us that he was born in Assyria; that in his youth and early manhood he was instructed in the laws, the literature, and the religious beliefs of the Greeks; that he travelled in many lands, and became familiar with the customs and philosophies of many races of men; that he carefully considered their religious rites, and was initiated into their mysteries. According to Eusebius, he was a sophist—a professional rhetorician—and lectured with distinction on various branches of Greek learning.

At last, to use his own phrase, he withdrew into himself, that, if possible, he might discover the truth. While he was earnestly engaged in this inquiry, he happened to meet with certain "barbaric writings," as he calls them, some of which were more ancient than Homer, and than the earliest of the writers who were honoured by the Greeks, and more ancient than even their legendary heroes. The sacred books of the Jews attracted him by the simplicity of

their style, by the naturalness and sincerity of their writers, by the knowledge of future events which was shown in their prophecies, by their admirable moral precepts, and by their teaching concerning the unity and supremacy of God.[1] In Christ he found the fulfilment of Jewish hope, and so he became a Christian.

About the middle of the second century he was in Rome. At this time he was intimately associated with Justin Martyr, and was a conspicuous defender of the Christian Faith. He tells us that Crescens, a philosopher, was the bitter enemy of both of them, and plotted their death. During the life of Justin his opinions were orthodox, but after the death of his friend his name was associated with some serious heresies. He came to hold severe views concerning the evil of the "flesh," and denounced marriage as a crime against the higher life of the soul. He was also charged with adopting some of the speculations of Valentinus the Gnostic. When he left Rome, he appears to have travelled eastward, and his last years were probably spent among his countrymen on the banks of the Euphrates.

Although he regarded Justin with affectionate admiration,[2] the two men were very unlike. Justin could never wholly forget the charm of his old philosophical studies, and speaks with sympathy of those who by

[1] *Address to the Greeks*, cap. 29, 31, 41.

[2] He speaks in his *Address* cap. 18, of "the most admirable Justin."

adventurous paths of speculation were endeavouring to find their way to the secret of the universe, and to the life of God. Tatian, who was probably a more learned man than Justin, assails every form of human philosophy with fierce contempt. Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, Heraclitus and Diogenes—he scorns and ridicules them all. He exults in the traditions —some of them quite untrustworthy—of their infirmities and vices, and he mocks at their claims to wisdom. A very few years ago it would have been necessary to say that of all his numerous writings only his *Address to the Greeks* remains ; but, to the astonishment and delight of scholars, the most important and valuable of his lost books has been recently recovered. The story of the recovery is so interesting that I will venture to tell it.

II.

In several ancient authors there are references to what is described as Tatian's *Diatessaron.* Eusebius says that

"Tatian composed a sort of connexion and compilation, I know not how, of the Gospels, and called it *The Diatessaron.* This work is current in some quarters even to the present day." [1]

Epiphanius (about A.D. 315 to A.D. 403) informs us that

[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, iv. 29. The translation given in the text is Dr. Lightfoot's.

"The *Diatessaron Gospel* is said to have been composed by him [Tatian]. It is called by some the Gospel according to the Hebrews."[1]

In 453, Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, near the Euphrates, writes:

"He [Tatian] composed the Gospel which is called *Diatessaron*, cutting out the genealogies and such other passages as show the Lord to have been born of the seed of David according to the flesh. This work was in use, not only among persons belonging to his sect, but also among those who follow the apostolic doctrine, as they did not perceive the mischief of the composition, but used the book in all simplicity on account of its brevity. *And I myself found more than two hundred such copies held in respect in the Churches of our parts. All these I collected and put away, and I replaced them by the Gospels of the Four Evangelists.*"[2]

This testimony is important. Theodoret knew the book and had carefully examined it; his words clearly imply that it was a compilation of the Four Gospels with certain passages cancelled which were inconsistent with Tatian's heresies concerning the necessary evil of the "flesh."

There is also a reference to the *Diatessaron* in the *Doctrine of Addai*, a kind of romance written in Syriac, and professing to give an account of the intro-

[1] That the *Diatessaron* was the Gospel according to the Hebrews was either a mistake of Epiphanius himself, or else of the persons whose opinions he is reporting. It is clear that Epiphanius had never seen the *Diatessaron*. For an explanation of the origin of the error, see HEMPHILL: *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, p. xv.

HEMPHILL: *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, p. xvi.

duction of Christianity into Edessa.[1] It contains the legend of Abgarus, the king of Edessa, who, when suffering from an incurable disease, is said to have heard of the miracles of our Lord, and to have sent a message to Him appealing to His pity, and imploring him to come to Edessa. The romance gives the following account of the worship of the Church which was founded in Edessa after our Lord's resurrection.

"They ministered in the church which Addæus had built, at the order and command of king Abgar, and they were furnished from what belonged to the king and to his nobles with some things for the house of God, and others for the supply of the poor. But a large multitude of people assembled day by day, and came to the prayers of the service, and to the reading of the Old Testament and the New of the *Diatessaron*."[2]

The story told in the *Doctrine of Addai* is wholly untrustworthy, but it shows that the *Diatessaron* must have been in common use in the Syrian Church when the book was written.

There is another testimony from a Syrian bishop, Bar-Salibi, who lived at the end of the twelfth century. He says that the *Diatessaron* of Tatian

[1] Lipsius thinks that it belongs to the end of the third century or the beginning of the fourth, but that "its groundwork must be much earlier."—*Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. i. p. 31.

[2] HEMPHILL, p. xvii. This romance was first published in Dr. Cureton's *Ancient Syriac Documents* (1864). Cureton's MS. read *Ditornon*, to which word no meaning could be attached. A MS. since discovered at St. Petersburg contains the reading *Diatessaron*.

began with the opening verse of John's Gospel. He also says that Ephraem the Syrian (about A.D. 308 to A.D. 373), theologian, poet, orator, saint, wrote a commentary on it.

"Tatian, the disciple of Justin, the philosopher and martyr, selected and patched together from the Four Gospels and constructed a Gospel which he called *Diatessaron*; that is, *Miscellanies*. On this work Mar Ephraem wrote an exposition, and its commencement was, '*In the beginning was the Word.*'"[1]

This was about all that was known in England of the *Diatessaron* when Dr. Lightfoot wrote the article on Tatian which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1877; and the evidence did not satisfy those who were unwilling to believe that as early as the middle of the second century, or a little later, our Four Gospels had not only been written, but had secured so uncontested a supremacy that even a heretic like Tatian recognised their authority, and used them as the basis of his narrative of our Lord's earthly history. Of the witnesses whose testimony has been quoted, it is at least doubtful whether Eusebius had seen the book. It is certain, I think, that Epiphanius had not seen it. The great writers of the West knew nothing of it. Victor of Capua, indeed, who flourished about the middle of the sixth century, had met with a *Harmony of the Gospels*, and supposed that it was the one which, according to Eusebius, had been composed by Tatian; but Victor calls it the *Diapente*, not the *Diatessaron*, and it began with the first verse of Luke

[1] HEMPHILL, p. xix.

instead of the first verse of John. It was only from the three Syrian witnesses—Theodoret, and the writer of the *Doctrine of Addai*, and Bar-Salibi—that any clear and satisfactory evidence could be derived. But Dr. Lightfoot maintained with great force that the traditional view of the Church was sound ; that Tatian had compiled a story of our Lord's life from the Four Gospels, and had called it the *Diatessaron.*

If Ephraem's Commentary on the *Diatessaron* had been preserved, the controversy might have been closed, for the Commentary would certainly show the general structure and outlines of the book, and would probably contain many quotations from it. Unfortunately, early in the last century, a ship, laden with ancient manuscripts for Pope Clement XI., sank in the Nile, and many of Ephraem's writings were lost ; among them, perhaps, his Lectures on the *Diatessaron.* To recover the lost book from the bed of the Nile was impossible ; it perished long ago ; but might not some other copy be still in existence ?

III.

Strangely enough, at the very time that Dr. Lightfoot was writing his article, and building up his laborious argument, he had Ephraem's Lectures on his own bookshelves, and they had been there for several years.[1] An Armenian translation of them

[1] *Essays on the Work entitled, "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 287, note.

had been published in 1836 by the Mechitarist monks, who are settled on the island of San Lazzaro, in the lagune between the Lido and Venice. These monks have had a remarkable history, and have done a remarkable work. Mechitar, the founder of the order, was an Armenian, and was born in 1676, at Siwar, the ancient Sebastia, a town near the source of the Halys, on the borders of Pontus and Cappadocia. In 1699 he was ordained priest, and came to be possessed with a passion for promoting both the intellectual and spiritual welfare of his countrymen. He went to Constantinople, and formed an association to carry out his design. Difficulties arose which led him to transfer his new society to Modon in the Morea, which at that time belonged to Venice. Here he and his companions worked for fourteen years, until, in 1715, the Morea was recovered by the Turks, and Mechitar's convent was broken up. He then received from the government of Venice the island of San Lazzaro, and from that time the Venetian convent has been the mother house of the order, and the centre of Armenian culture. Other congregations have been founded in Vienna, at Trieste, and at several places in Hungary.

The *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Dec. 17th, 1850), bears a strong testimony to the great services which the Mechitarists have rendered to their fellow countrymen. It says:

"When one takes a nearer view of their labours at Vienna and Venice, one is amazed at the powerful influence which the

literary activity of these learned monks exerts on the Armenian nation scattered throughout the East. The reviews, the books, the numerous translations of works on history, geography, philology, natural science, and voyages and travels, which are printed in the Mechitarist presses of Vienna and Venice, are carried far beyond Persia to the banks of the Indus and the Ganges, and have everywhere called forth among the Armenians the desire of knowledge and a taste for reading, and set on foot a literary movement, which was before entirely dormant in a people, till lately, essentially and exclusively commercial."[1]

Among the treasures of their library the monks possess "two 12th century MSS. of an Armenian translation, made apparently in the fifth century from the Syriac, of Ephraem's Commentary on a Gospel Harmony."[2] In 1836 they published an Armenian edition of Ephraem's works in four volumes octavo; and the commentary is contained in the second volume.

"I had for some years," says Dr. Lightfoot, writing in 1889, "possessed a copy of this work, . . . and the thought had more than once crossed my mind that possibly it might throw light on Ephraem's mode of dealing with the Gospels, as I knew that it contained notes on St. Paul's Epistles, or some portion of them. I did not, however, then possess sufficient knowledge of Armenian to sift its contents, but I hoped to investigate the matter when I had mastered enough of the language."[3]

[1] The account of the Mechitarists in the text is summarized from an article in Addis and Arnold's *Catholic Dictionary*: and the passage from the *Allgemeine Zeitung* is taken from that article.

[2] HEMPHILL, p. xxi.

[3] *Essays*, etc., p. 287.

But even without a knowledge of Armenian, Dr. Lightfoot might have known the contents of Ephraem's Lectures before he published his article in May, 1877. For in 1876 a Latin translation had been published in Venice. As early as 1841, one of the monks, Father Aucha, had translated the Lectures into Latin, but the translation had remained in MS. in the Library of San Lazzaro. At last it somehow came to the knowledge of Dr. George Moesinger, professor of biblical studies at Salzburg, and it was placed in his hands, with one of the MSS. from which the Armenian text had been printed. He revised the translation, and published it, as I have said, in 1876. Dr. Wace, who wrote a series of admirable articles on the *Diatessaron*, in the *Expositor* for 1881 and 1882, justly remarks that "considering the immense importance of Ephraem's work, it is a most curious point that it should have been before the world for nearly five years in a Latin translation, and should have remained practically unnoticed by any of the laborious scholars of Germany."[1] He adds: "Such an incident might well lead us to think that our materials for criticism are beginning to overpower us, and that some of our best treasures may be hidden

[1] The *Expositor*, vol. ii., second series, p. 3. Dr. Wace quotes from a notice by Dr. Adolf Harnack, which had recently appeared in Brieger's *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, the following sentence: "Without doubt this publication contains the most important acquisition which our history of pre-catholic Christianity has received of late years."

from us like needles in a hay-stack." It is also curious that the importance of this discovery was at last brought home to the scholars of Germany and England by an American theologian, Dr. Ezra Abbot, who called attention to it in his book on the *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, published in 1880.

The Lectures — or, as Dr. Wace prefers to call them, the *Scholia* of Ephraem—demonstrated that the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, published soon after the middle of the second century, was a continuous narrative of our Lord's life, consisting of "a close welding together of the Four canonical Gospels." How much of the contents of the Gospels Tatian omitted could not be confidently inferred from Ephraem's Lectures, for the Lectures are not a continuous commentary; but it was certain that Tatian used all the Four, and no other.[1]

IV.

But the romantic story of the *Diatessaron* is not yet finished. The discovery of Ephraem's Lectures has been followed by the discovery of the *Diatessaron* itself.

A hundred and fifty years ago Stephen Evodius Assemani, a Syrian Maronite, and a member of a family of famous Orientalists, assisted his uncle Joseph Aloysius in his work in the Vatican Library; and he published, among other learned books, an account of the Oriental manuscripts contained in the

[1] *Expositor*, vol. ii., second series, pp. 10, 11.

Library. In this there is a brief notice of an Arabic MS. professing to be a translation of the *Diatessaron* of Tatian. Brief accounts of it were also given by Akerblad and the younger Rosenmüller. Akerblad, a Swedish scholar, who was famous for his Runic, Coptic, Phœnician, and ancient Egyptian learning, died about seventy years ago. The younger Rosenmüller, Professor of Oriental Literature at Leipsic, died some years later. But the accounts which these three eminent scholars had given of the MS. were meagre and unsatisfactory.

The discussions which were occasioned by the publication of Ephraem's Lectures recalled attention to these notices of the MS., and Ciasca, one of the scribes of the Vatican, promised in 1883 to give a fuller and more accurate description of it, and, if he had the leisure, to publish it in full. Circumstances delayed the fulfilment of both promises. But in the year 1886 an eminent dignitary among the Catholic Copts was visiting Rome, and Ciasca showed him the Tatian MS. He said that a similar one was in the possession of a member of his communion in Egypt. In the course of the summer this second MS., which is described as beautifully written and illuminated in gold and colours, was sent to Rome; and in 1888 it was published.[1]

It contains notes at the beginning and the end in

[1] *Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmoniæ Arabice.* Romæ, S.C. De Prop. Fid., 1888.

which it is described as an Arabic translation of Tatian's *Diatessaron* made from the Syriac; it gives the name of the translator and also the name of the writer of the Syriac MS. from which the translation was made. The translator lived in the early part of the eleventh century; the writer of the Syriac MS. at the end of the ninth century. The Egyptian MS. supplies passages which are wanting in the imperfect MS. in the Vatican, and it is free from the interpolations which are recognisable in that MS.

The date of this translation shows that six centuries after Theodoret had collected two hundred copies of the *Diatessaron* from the Churches of his diocese, and replaced them with copies of the Four Gospels, there were Assyrian Christians who still clung to the book from which their fathers in the second century had learnt the story of Christ. But their country was under the Saracen yoke; they had forgotten the mother tongue of their race; they were speaking the language of their conquerors; and so the *Diatessaron* was translated into Arabic.

In its contents and in the order in which the facts of our Lord's life are narrated the Arabic *Diatessaron* is practically identical with the Syriac *Diatessaron* which was used by Ephraem. "Except in four instances, the order in which passages of the Gospels are cited by Ephraem is the order in which they occur in the Arabic Harmony."[1] It begins with the first

[1] HEMPHILL, pp. xxviii, xxix.

five verses of the Gospel of John; then follows the account of the birth of John the Baptist contained in the first chapter of Luke; then the appearance of the angel to Joseph as told by Matthew; then the story of our Lord's birth, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, the prophecy of Simeon and of Anna as given by Luke; then the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, and the return of Joseph and Mary to Nazareth, as told by Matthew. From this point Ephraem passes to the great words in the first chapter of John: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us. Through Moses is the law, but its truth through Jesus our Lord. Grace and truth came through Jesus. The Jews sent to John and say to him, Who art thou? He confessed, saying, I am not the Christ. They say to him, Art thou Elias? He says, No."[1] But the *Diatessaron*, after the slaughter of the children and after the return to Nazareth, gives Luke's account of our Lord's visit to Jerusalem when He was twelve years of age; this is followed by a brief statement of the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist; and then follows John i. 7–28, which contains the passage just quoted from Ephraem. In

[1] I have given this quotation as it appears in HEMPHILL. It must be remembered that Ephraem wrote in *Syriac*; that we have his Lectures in an *Armenian* translation; that the Armenian translation has been translated into *Latin*, and that it is from this Latin translation of an Armenian translation that the passage has been translated into *English*.

Ephraem, singularly enough, the comments on our Lord's visit to Jerusalem in His boyhood occur after the comments on this testimony of the Baptist. This is one of the four cases in which Ephraem's order differs from the order of the Arabic *Diatessaron.* Until the story reaches the selection of the Twelve Apostles Tatian shows considerable freedom in his arrangement of the incidents ; but after this, and beginning with the Sermon on the Mount, he practically follows Matthew's order, until he comes to the Last Supper. Passages from Mark, Luke, and John are introduced at successive stages of the narrative. On what principle he determined their place it is difficult to discover. Why, for instance, should he have given the account of the visit of Nicodemus to our Lord (John iii. 1–21) after the story of the barren fig tree, and far on towards the close of our Lord's ministry? In this singular order Ephraem agrees with the Arabic text.

But while it is apparent that the contents and arrangement of the Arabic *Diatessaron* are practically identical with the contents and arrangement of the Syriac *Diatessaron* used by Ephraem, the *readings* of the translation show that the text had been revised. Ephraem's quotations represent a more ancient text than that represented by the Arabic translation.

V.

And now, having told the story of the discovery of these two ancient books — the *Diatessaron* and

the *Lectures* upon it—I have to show their value in relation to the question of the early origin and the historical trustworthiness of our Four Gospels.

Tatian was a man of intellectual vigour, and a scholar. There was fierceness in him, and obstinacy, and intolerance ; but his *Address to the Greeks* gives one the impression that he had courage and incorruptible honesty. He was a friend of Justin. He had travelled far, and had seen the Christians of many lands. And, what for my immediate purpose is as important as any of the facts which I have just recited, he was a heretic.

The date at which he left Rome is uncertain. It may have been as early as A.D. 150, or even earlier. It can hardly have been as late as A.D. 170. There is something attractive in the suggestion that, although he believed that on some grave subjects the faith and the practice of the orthodox Churches were at fault, he cared more for the rescue of his countrymen from heathenism than for the correction of the theological and ethical errors of those who had found eternal redemption in Christ. Whatever may have been his motives, he returned to the land of his birth, and preached the Christian Gospel to men who had not yet received it. He found it necessary to give to his converts the story of Christ in their own tongue ; and he took the story as it is given in our Four Gospels. With his characteristic audacity, he cut out the genealogies, which he regarded as inconsistent with a true conception of the greatness and glory

of Christ; and he did not shrink from tampering with the text of those passages which he retained. But the Gospels which he used, and the greater part of which he transferred to his own narrative, were the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and he used no others. Why did he use all the Four? Why did he use these alone? He had broken with the orthodox Churches, and was beyond their control. It was from himself that the Churches for whose use his narrative was prepared had received the Christian Faith. He was free—absolutely free—to give them any Gospel that he chose. I ask again, Why did he give them a Gospel constructed from the Four Gospels which are still in our hands?

There is an obvious answer to this question, and I think that the obvious answer is the only reasonable one. When he left Rome, these Four Gospels had a unique place in the Christian Churches of all lands. He knew that they contained the real and authentic story of our Lord's life. He might think that the genealogies had no right to a place in the first Gospel and the third. He thought it expedient to modify some expressions which might lead his converts into theological error. But if he had to give his converts a narrative of our Lord's life, it was a matter of course that he should give them the story that had been told by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This was the trustworthy story; he could give no other. And although he had tampered with the text, his *Diatessaron* had so little in it to create orthodox sus-

picion, and contained the narrative in so convenient a form, that Ephraem, the glory of the Syrian Church, expounded it.

Only thirteen years ago the evidence which could be alleged in support of the traditional theory that Tatian's *Diatessaron* was composed of our Four Gospels, though in my judgment sufficient, was scanty.[1] To Christian apologists, Tatian's *Address to the Greeks* contained clear proof that he knew the Gospel of John. The following passages seemed to place this beyond doubt: "God is a Spirit" (cap. 4). "And this then is the saying: The darkness comprehendeth not the light" (cap. 13). "Follow ye the only God. All things have been made by Him, and apart from Him hath been made no one thing" (cap. 19). But the proof was declared to be inadequate. The recovery of Ephraem's Lectures, and of the Arabic translation of the *Diatessaron* has wholly changed the conditions of the controversy. That Tatian, the friend of Justin Martyr, knew our Four Gospels, and that in his *Diatessaron* he worked them into a continuous narrative, is now finally demonstrated.

VI.

There is one more chapter to complete the story of this curious work, and you may be interested in hearing it.

I have already told you that Victor of Capua, the

[1] See pp. 155–159, *ante*.

author of several commentaries on the books of the Old and the New Testament, and of a work, now lost, on the true method of determining Easter, met with a Latin MS. containing a Harmony of the Four Gospels. That was about A.D. 540. The MS. had no title; but finding in Eusebius that Tatian had constructed a *Diatessaron*, he attributed it to Tatian. After the MS. had been copied under his direction, he corrected it, and then published it with the other books of the New Testament.[1]

Till recently it was the general opinion of scholars that Victor was in error in supposing that Tatian was its original author. One piece of evidence seemed to be decisive: Tatian's *Diatessaron* was said to have begun with the first verses of the Gospel of John; in Victor's *Harmony* these verses are preceded by four verses from the Gospel of Luke. But the publication of Ephraem's Lectures on the *Diatessaron*, and of the *Diatessaron* itself, has shown that Victor was right.

The order in which the contents of the Four Gospels are arranged by Tatian is followed with inconsiderable variations in the Latin *Harmony* of Victor; and this order is so remarkable—I might say so wayward and eccentric—that the coincidence could not have been accidental. Victor corrected the Latin text of the *Harmony*, and modified it in

[1] This is known as the *Codex Fuldensis*; it contains, in addition to the books in our present Canon, the apocryphal *Epistle to the Laodiceans*. The Codex is valuable as preserving an early text of the Latin Vulgate of Jerome.

other ways: the genealogies, for example, and some other passages, were probably inserted by him; but the *Harmony*, even as it stands, after Victor's revision, is substantially Tatian's.[1]

The *Harmony*, published by Victor—Tatian's *Harmony*—has had a great place in the history of the Christian Faith in Europe. There is a copy of it at Fulda, in Hesse Cassel, which, according to tradition, was in the hands of Boniface, the apostle of Germany, when he suffered martyrdom. It is supposed that when the body of the martyred saint was brought to Fulda the copy of the Gospels which he loved was brought with it. If the tradition is true—and there is said to be internal evidence that the book belonged to Boniface—the great missionary who in the eighth century evangelized the heathen races on the banks of the Rhine used a narrative of our Lord's life which had originally been prepared by the heretic Tatian for converts from heathenism on the banks of the Euphrates.

In the ninth century it was translated into the dialect of the Eastern Franks; and it appears to have been the basis of a poetical life of our Lord which was written for the Southern Franks, and which was intended to be sung to the harp. In the same century it furnished the substance of the

[1] The substantial identity of Victor's *Harmony* with Tatian's *Diatessaron* was first shown by Dr. Wace in the *Expositor*, vol. ii., Second Series, pp. 128–137 (1881).

Hêliand, which is described by its editor as the greatest monument of the old Saxon language in existence. For thirty years Charlemagne had endeavoured to compel the Saxons to accept the Christian Gospel. They abhorred his faith, but could not resist his arms. They submitted to baptism as an acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Franks, rather than as a confession of the authority and grace of Christ; but they remained heathen still, and they preserved the superstitions of their ancestors by singing in the depths of their forests their old songs in honour of their old gods. When Louis the Pious succeeded his father, he determined on a kindlier and more effective policy. Had not the story of Christ a greater charm than the legends of Woden and of Thor? If the Christian story could be told in song by a poet of genius, it might perhaps win the hearts of the wild and resolute men who, while they bore the Christian name, regarded Christ with indifference or hatred as the God of their conquerors. At the request of the king the *Hêliand* was written—a noble poem telling the story of our Lord as it is told in the *Harmony* of Victor. According to its editor, it "breathes the spirit of the old Saxon nation and customs; and the diction sometimes rises to a very high pitch of poetic power and beauty. There is no doubt," he adds, "that the benign and beautiful doctrines of Christianity, by soothing the ears of ignorant heathen, would in this way find a ready access to their hearts."

It is a wonderful story. The *Diatessaron* was prepared by a heretic in the second century for the instruction of converts from heathenism in Assyria; in the eighth century and the ninth, converts from heathenism in the heart of Germany learnt from it the story of Christ. Scholars lamented that it had been lost among other treasures of the East; and when within the last few years it was discovered, they learnt that it had been known in the West for 1,300 years. There was ruggedness, fierceness, intolerance in the character of Tatian; but we may venture to hope that there was also a genuine and even passionate love for his Lord. In the history, could he have foreseen it, of that story of our Lord's life which he prepared for his countrymen, he would have found abundant consolation for all the distrust and hatred with which he was regarded on account of his heresies. The service which he rendered to men for Christ's sake Christ has gloriously honoured.

NOTE.

To those of my readers who wish for a fuller account of the *Diatessaron* and its recovery, I strongly recommend Dr. Hemphill's *Diatessaron of Tatian* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), to which I am largely indebted for the material of this Lecture.

LECTURE X.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

I.

JUSTIN MARTYR was born at Neapolis, the modern Nablous, which lies in the beautiful valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, near to Jacob's Well and "the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."

His parents were heathen, and in his *Dialogue with Trypho* he tells, with considerable grace, humour, and pathos, the story of his early studies. To Justin, philosophy had always been, and it always remained, the noblest of human pursuits; for he believed that its aim was to restore man to God. But he came to the conclusion that the disciples of the illustrious men who first gave themselves to the great search after the supreme truth had unhappily forgotten the real end of the adventurous inquiry; and so it had come to pass that Platonists, Stoics, Peripatetics, and the rest, were more loyal to the authority of their teachers than to the truth itself. Justin's first master was a Stoic; but he says, "after spending a considerable time with him, and finding

that I learnt nothing more about God—for he himself knew nothing and said that such knowledge was unnecessary—I left him and went to another, who was called a Peripatetic, and who in his own opinion was a very keen and clever person." In the course of a few days the Peripatetic asked Justin to name the fees he proposed to pay, that their intercourse might be profitable to both of them. Thereupon Justin left him, thinking that a man who was anxious about the money he was to get for his teaching was no true philosopher. Still his soul was possessed with an uncontrollable desire to master the ultimate secret of the universe, and he attached himself to a Pythagorean who had a great reputation, and who had an immense opinion of his own wisdom. His new master asked him whether he had studied music, astronomy, and geometry; "for, surely," he said, "you do not hope to gaze on the truths which perfect the blessed life unless you have first learnt those things which draw the soul from the things of sense, discipline it for the world of the spirit, and so enable it to behold that which is really the beautiful and the good." Justin lost heart. He knew nothing of music, astronomy, and geometry; he thought that these branches of learning, if he studied them to any purpose, would occupy him for many years, and that his passion for the knowledge of God would remain long unsatisfied. He could not endure the delay, and yet he was sorry to go to another master, for he thought that the Pythagorean had some real knowledge of

the Divine mystery, which he longed to discover. But the Platonists had a great name, and a teacher of Platonism settled in Neapolis;[1] Justin therefore resolved to try Platonism. He devoted a great part of every day to his new master, and soon began to glow with enthusiasm for the Platonic doctrine. Now, at last, his thought was moving in regions lying beyond and above the vicissitudes and illusions of material things. The contemplation of those Eternal Ideas in which Plato found the ultimate truth and reality of all things gave his mind wings, and he trusted that soon he would have an immediate vision and knowledge of God; "for this is the end of the Platonic philosophy."

While he was possessed with these great hopes, it was his custom to go to a lonely spot not far from the sea for purposes of meditation. On one memorable day his solitude was disturbed. He was followed by an aged, venerable man, with gentle manners, who explained to Justin that he had been anxious about some of the members of his household who were away from home, and that he had come to that lonely place to see whether there was any chance of their returning—an explanation in which, under a thin and transparent veil, he indicates that

[1] It seems natural to suppose that Justin's phrase "our city" refers to the city of his birth rather than to Ephesus, in which, according to Eusebius, the scene of the conversation with Trypho is laid.

Justin was a brother of his whom he hoped to bring back to the home of the Father of all. Justin, of course, does not profess to recognise his meaning, but explains in return why it is that he seeks solitude. Then the two begin to discuss some of the higher questions of philosophy—the difference between the knowledge which is given in the ordinary sciences and the knowledge of God; whether it is possible to know God; the true nature of the soul, and its immortality. The stranger then tells Justin that long before the times of those who were reverenced as philosophers there lived certain prophets — men righteous, blessed, and dear to God, who spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Their writings were still in existence, and contained great discoveries concerning the origin and the end of all things, and concerning other matters which ought to be known to the philosopher. Then he went on to speak of Christ, the Son of God. "But," said the stranger, "these things are not to be seen and understood by all men, but only by those to whom it is given to understand them by God and by His Christ; pray, therefore, that above all things the gates of light may be opened to thee." When he had said these and many other things, he went away, and Justin never saw him again.

From that time a fire was kindled in Justin's soul—a fire that was never extinguished. He came to have a great love for the Jewish prophets and for the friends of Christ. He found in them what he

had not found in the writings of the philosophers. He left the school of Plato for the school of Christ.

This is the story which Justin tells of his own conversion in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Elsewhere he says that while he was delighting in the doctrines of Plato the courage with which the Christians met death and all other terrible things convinced him that they could not be guilty of the secret crimes with which they were charged by their enemies.[1]

It is apparent that to Justin the Christian Gospel was, first of all, a revelation of things invisible and Divine. It was more than this—it brought to a sinful race the assurance of the infinite mercy of God, and it proclaimed the gift of eternal life ; but it was in his search for wisdom that he found Christ. For him the Gospel was also a philosophy ; it satisfied his unquenchable thirst for the knowledge of God.

He remained a philosopher after he became a Christian, and still wore the philosopher's cloak. It was the business of his life to make known the truth which God had made known to him. If through his fault other men were ignorant of the Christian revelation, the guilt of the sin from which the knowledge of Christ would have saved them would be his.[2] And so he was eager to explain his new Faith to every man, and was ready to discuss it with all sorts of people. There was nothing in him of the savage fierceness with which Tatian assaulted heathenism,

[1] *Second Apology*, cap. 12.

[2] *First Apology*, cap. 3.

but there was a quiet courage which no peril could subdue.

We know little of his life after his conversion, except that it was spent in illustrating and defending the Gospel of Christ. He taught in Rome, and perhaps in Ephesus. The date of his martyrdom is uncertain. It may have been as early as A.D. 148: it may have been as late as A.D. 163.[1]

Of his works, some of the most important are lost. The most valuable of these is that which he had written *Against all the Heresies.* He refers to it in his *First Apology* (cap. 26). Some of the books which have been attributed to him can hardly be his. There remain his *First Apology*, which was written, as he says, about 150 years after the birth of our Lord, and was addressed to the Emperor Marcus Antoninus; his *Second Apology*; and his *Dialogue with Trypho* the Jew. That these three were written by Justin is universally acknowledged.

II.

In his *First Apology* he describes the weekly assemblies of the Christians:

[1] "After a complete examination of the evidence, Mr. Hort concludes that 'we may, without fear of considerable error, set down Justin's *First Apology* to 145 or better still to 146, and his death to 148. The *Second Apology*, if really separate from the *First*, will then fall in 146 or 147, and the *Dialogue with Trypho* about the same time.'"—WESTCOTT: *Canon of New Testament*, p. 99.

"On the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, or the writings of the prophets, are read as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, in like manner, offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen. And there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given; and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do and willing give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us; and, in a word, takes care of all who are in need."[1]

This was how Christians met for worship in the year A.D. 150 or earlier. There is a beautiful and pathetic simplicity in the picture. They were brothers and sisters in Christ; they sat at His table; they remembered orphans and widows, the sick, the poor, and strangers who were their guests, and relieved them. They were in peril of suffering loss of property, imprisonment, and death as the penalty of their Christian faith. While they were sitting at the Lord's Table they were reminded of their peril; for one of the objects for which their contributions were collected was to give relief to those who were "in bonds" for Christ's sake.

[1] *First Apology*, cap. 67 ("Ante-Nicene Library" translation).

In several other places in his *First Apology* Justin speaks of these *Memoirs of the Apostles*, which he says were read in the Christian assemblies. He says:

"The angel of God who was sent to the same virgin at that time brought her good news, saying, 'Behold, thou shalt conceive of the Holy Ghost, and shalt bear a Son, and He shall be called the Son of the Highest, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins,' as *they who have recorded* all that concerns our Saviour Jesus Christ have taught."—*First Apology*, cap. 33.

"The *apostles* in the *Memoirs* composed by them, which are called *Gospels*, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them—that Jesus took bread, and, when He had given thanks, said, 'This do ye in remembrance of Me; this is My body'; and that after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, 'This is My blood,' and gave it to them alone."—*Ibid.*, cap. 66.

In the *Dialogue with Trypho* there are the following references to the *Memoirs*:

"He called one of His disciples—previously known by the name of Simon—Peter; since he recognised Him to be Christ, the Son of God, by the revelation of the Father; and since we find it recorded in the *Memoirs of the Apostles* that He is the Son of God; and since we call Him the Son, we have understood that He proceeded before all creatures from the Father by His power and will, and that He became man by the Virgin."—*Dialogue with Trypho*, cap. 100.

"When He came out of the water, the Holy Ghost lighted on Him like a dove [as] the *apostles* of this very Christ of ours *wrote*."—*Ibid.*, cap. 88.

"They that saw Him crucified . . . spake in mockery the words which are recorded in the *Memoirs of His Apostles*: 'He said that He was the Son of God: let Him come down; let God save Him.'"—*Ibid.*, cap. 101.

"He kept silence and chose to return no answer to any one in the presence of Pilate, as has been declared in the *Memoirs of the Apostles*."—*Ibid.*, cap. 102.

"I have already proved that He was the only begotten of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner, Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man through the virgin, as we have learned from the *Memoirs*."—*Ibid.*, cap. 105.

"When Christ was giving up the spirit on the cross, He said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,' as I learned also from the *Memoirs*."—*Ibid.*, cap. 105.

"In the *Memoirs*, which I say were drawn up by the *apostles* and *those who followed them* [it is recorded] that His sweat fell down like drops of blood while He was praying, and saying, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass.'"—*Ibid.*, cap. 103.

"In the *Gospel* it is written that He said, 'All things are delivered unto Me by My Father'; and 'No man knoweth the Father but the Son, nor the Son but the Father, and they to whom the Son will reveal Him.'"—*Ibid.*, cap. 100.

Trypho is represented as saying:

"I am aware that your precepts in the so called *Gospel* are so wonderful and so great that I suspect no one can keep them; for I have carefully *read* them."—*Ibid.*, cap. 10.

I might quote other passages, but these are sufficient for my purpose.

The "*Memoirs*," the "*Memoirs of His Apostles*," the "*Memoirs drawn up by the Apostles and those who followed them*," the "*Memoirs composed by them* [the apostles], *which are called Gospels*":—how could Justin have described more accurately the four narratives of our Lord's life which are contained in the New Testament? Matthew and John were apostles Mark and Luke were followers of the apostles; and

it is deserving of notice that in the passage in which Justin describes the Memoirs as having been drawn up, not merely by the apostles, but by their followers, he is about to mention a fact which is recorded only in the Gospel of Luke.[1] In the quotations which I have read, you have already recognised passages, or references to passages, with which you are familiar in our Gospels.

III.

The worth of Justin's testimony is challenged because he does not say explicitly that the *Memoirs* which were read in the Christian assemblies in his time were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Why did he not give the names of the writers? How can we tell that these *Memoirs*, which Justin says were called *Gospels*, were the same Gospels that are in our hands to-day?

The answer to this question may be given in a single sentence. When Christian writers in the second and third centuries were addressing those who were not Christians, they did not appeal by name to the sacred books of the Church. Why should they? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were no authorities to those who had not received the Christian Faith. The practice of Justin was the practice of the other apologists. Tatian, as we have

[1] "His sweat fell down like drops [of blood] while He was praying."—*Dialogue with Trypho*, cap. 103. See Luke xxii. 44.

seen, composed a *Harmony* of the Gospels. In his *Address to the Greeks*, though there are allusions to passages in the First Gospel and the Fourth, he never names either Matthew or John. Tertullian, when he is writing for Christians, uses the Gospels as freely as they are used by any modern preacher, and names their writers, but in his *Apology* their names are not once mentioned. But I repeat that our Gospels could not be described more accurately than they are described by Justin. They are *Memoirs*, *Recollections*, not regular and complete biographies; and they were drawn up by "apostles and those who followed them."

I have already given a considerable number of passages in which Justin either quotes the *Memoirs* or refers to the facts which they record. In the three works of Justin, which are universally acknowledged as genuine, Otto of Jena, who has edited Justin's works, finds more than 200 passages in which there are either quotations from our Gospels or references to them. From these quotations or references every one of our Four Gospels receives support. For example: in the *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin writes, "Wherefore also our Christ said [when He was] on earth to those who were affirming that Elijah must come before Christ: 'Elijah shall come and restore all things; but I say unto you that Elijah has already come, and they knew him not, but have done to him whatsoever they chose.'" The quotation so far is almost a verbally exact quotation from Matthew;

but the substance of it is found in Luke. But Justin adds, "And it is written, 'Then the disciples understood that He spake to them about John the Baptist.'"[1] This is an exact quotation from Matthew, and is found in *Matthew only*. Again, Justin says that our Lord changed the names of the two sons of Zebedee to Boanerges.[2] This fact is recorded by *Mark only*. Again, he quotes the words of our Lord on the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."[3] These words are found in *Luke only*. Finally, he quotes our Lord as saying, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."[4] The quotation is not verbally exact, but it is very difficult, I think, to resist the conviction that Justin had in his mind the two sayings of our Lord recorded by John, and recorded by *John only*: "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

IV.

This last passage suggests another objection to the argument resting on Justin's quotations. It is alleged that in a large number of instances the quotations from the *Memoirs* do not exactly correspond to the text of our Four Gospels, and that,

[1] *Dialogue with Trypho*, cap. 49. [2] *Ibid.*, cap. 106.
[3] *Ibid.*, cap. 105. [4] *First Apology*, cap. 61.

therefore, it is probable that Justin quoted from Gospels which have now disappeared. It is assumed that our own Gospels, which are attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, preserve a large part of the contents of these more ancient narratives; but that the lost Gospels contained an earlier and therefore more trustworthy account of our Lord's life and teaching.

The objection is untenable. Justin quotes forty-eight passages from the Pentateuch: eighteen are quoted exactly, nineteen with slight variations, eleven with marked divergence. He quotes twenty-one passages from the Psalms: sixteen exactly, *including nine (or ten) whole Psalms*, two with slight variations, three with decided variations. He quotes fifty-three passages from Isaiah: twenty-five exactly, twelve with slight variations, sixteen with decided variations.[1] Are we to conclude that we have a later Pentateuch, a later Psalter, a later Isaiah than Justin had; that Justin's Pentateuch, Justin's Psalter, Justin's Isaiah have been lost and have left no trace of their existence behind them; and that although our Pentateuch, Psalter, and Isaiah contain a large part of the materials which were found in the more ancient books, the materials have been re-arranged by some later hand, supplemented by later traditions, modified and coloured under the influence of later forms of theological thought? The inference is an obviously

[1] SANDAY: *Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 111, 112.

impossible one. The Jews are the trustworthy custodians of their sacred books.

The explanation of the inexactness of a large proportion of Justin's quotations from the Old Testament is very simple, and does not require any hypothesis of a lost Pentateuch, a lost Psalter, a lost Isaiah. For Justin to have verified all the passages that he quoted would have been a troublesome and tedious business; and therefore he left many of them unverified.

A modern writer, if he is not quite sure of the passage which he is quoting, can easily turn it up. When he does not remember chapter and verse, his eye can run over page after page without difficulty till he discovers the words which he is hunting for. If after a few minutes' search he is still at fault, he has his Concordance. Justin had no Concordance, and to find a passage in a clumsy, unhandy, ancient manuscript was a much more laborious matter than to find it in a printed book. And, therefore, he generally trusted his memory, but his memory often failed him. He gave the substance of the text, but missed the exact words; sometimes he ran two sentences into one. The figures which I have given show that this explanation is the true one. Of the sixteen exact quotations from the Psalms, nine (or ten) are *whole* Psalms; when he wanted to quote a whole Psalm, he naturally distrusted his memory, and he therefore turned to the Psalter and copied the exact text. For shorter quotations, if he was sure of the substance

of the text, it was not worth while to take so much trouble.

His quotations from the first three Gospels are, however, much less exact than even his quotations from the Old Testament. Of "direct quotations," Professor Sanday finds sixty-seven; ten are substantially exact; twenty-five present slight variations; thirty-two marked variations.[1] There is a simple and natural explanation of this greater inexactness. He knew the Gospels very much better than he knew the Old Testament, and he therefore verified his New Testament quotations less frequently. Verbal accuracy was not essential to his purpose. The books in which the quotations occur are not commentaries: two of them are defences of the Christian faith against heathenism; the third is a controversial discussion with a Jew. If he gave the substance of the passages which he quoted from the Gospels, it was enough.

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[1] SANDAY: *The Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 114–116. The following note deserves to be considered: "A somewhat similar classification has been made by De Wette, *Einleitung in das N. T.*, pp. 104–110, in which, however, the standard seems somewhat lower than that which I have assumed; several variations which I had classed as decided De Wette considers to be only slight. I hope I may consider this a proof that the classification above given has not been influenced by bias."

V.

The question whether these *Memoirs* of Church Apostles, these "Gospels" which Justin used, and which in his time were read every Sunday in the Christian assemblies, were the same as our Gospels can be tried in another way. What account did the *Memoirs* give of our Lord Jesus Christ, His history and His teaching? Listen to the following summary.[1]

ACCORDING to Justin, the Messiah was born, without sin, of a virgin *who* was descended from David,
Matt. i. 2–6. Jesse, Phares, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, Luke iii. 31–34.
and Abraham, if not (the reading here is doubtful) from Adam himself.

To Mary it was announced by the angel Gabriel that, while yet a Luke i. 26.
virgin, the power of God, or of the Luke i. 35.
Highest, should overshadow her, and she should conceive and bear a son Luke i. 31.
Matt. i. 21. whose name she should call Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins.

Joseph observing that Mary, his
Matt. i. 18–25. espoused, was with child, was warned in a dream not to put her away, because that which was in her womb was of the Holy Ghost. Thus the
Matt. i. 23. prophecy, Isaiah vii. 14 ("Behold

[1] Justin's references and allusions to our Lord's history were collected by Credner and Hilgenfeld, and have been thrown by Professor Sanday into what he calls "a sort of running narrative." This narrative I have given in the text. See *Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 91–98.

the virgin," etc.) was fulfilled. The mother of John the Baptist was Elizabeth. The birthplace of the Messiah had been indicated by the prophecy of Micah (v. 2, "Bethlehem not the least among the princes of Judah"). There He was born, as the Romans might learn from the census taken by Cyrenius, the first *procurator* of *Judæa*. His life extended from Cyrenius to Pontius Pilate. So, in consequence of this, the first census in Judæa, Joseph went up from Nazareth, where he dwelt, to Bethlehem, *whence he was*, as a member of the tribe of Judah. The parents of Jesus could find no lodgings in Bethlehem, so it came to pass that He was born *in a cave near the village*, and laid in a manger. At His birth there came magi *from Arabia*, who knew by a star that had appeared in the *heaven* that a King had been born in Judæa. Having paid Him their homage, and offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, they were warned not to return to Herod, whom they had consulted on the way. He however, not willing that the child should escape, ordered a massacre of *all* the children in Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah xxxi. 15 ("Rachel weeping for children," etc.). Joseph and his wife meanwhile, with the Babe, had fled to Egypt; for the Father resolved that He to whom He had given birth should not die

Luke i. 57.
Matt. ii. 5, 6.
Luke ii. 1, 2.
Luke ii. 4.
Luke ii. 7.
Ibid.
Matt. ii. 1.
Matt. ii. 2.
Matt. ii. 11.
Matt. ii. 12.
Matt. ii. 1–7.
Matt. ii. 16.
Matt. ii. 17, 18.
Matt. ii. 13–15.

before He had preached His word as a man. There they stayed until
Matt. ii. 22. Archelaus succeeded Herod, and then returned.

By process of nature He grew to the age of thirty years or more, *not* Luke iii. 23.
comely of aspect (*as had been prophesied*), practising the trade of
Matt. vi. 3. a carpenter, *making ploughs and yokes, emblems of righteousness.* He remained hidden till John, the herald of His coming, came forward,
Matt xvii. 12,13. the spirit of Elias being in him; and
Matt. iii. 2. as he *sat* by the river Jordan, cried Luke iii. 3.
to men to repent. As he preached
Matt. iii. 4. in his wild garb, he declared that he was not the Christ, but that One (John i. 19 ff.)
Matt. iii. 11, 12. stronger than he was coming after Luke iii. 16, 17.
him, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear, etc. The later history of John Justin also mentions, how,
Matt. xiv. 3. having been put in prison, at a Luke iii. 20.
feast on Herod's birthday, he was
Matt. xiv. 6 ff. beheaded at the instance of his sister's daughter. This John was
Matt. xvii. 11–13. Elias, who was to come before the Christ.

At the baptism of Jesus *a fire was kindled on the Jordan*, and, as He went up out of the water, the
Matt. iii. 16. Holy Ghost alighted upon Him, and Luke iii. 21, 22.
a voice was heard from heaven, *saying, in the words of David*, "Thou art My Son; *this day have I begotten Thee.*"

Matt. iv. 1–9. After His baptism He was tempted by the devil, who ended by claiming homage from Him. To this Christ

replied, "Get thee behind Me,
Matt. iv. 11. Satan," etc. So the devil departed Luke iv. 13.
from Him at that time, worsted and
convicted.

Justin knew that the words of
Jesus were short and concise, not
like those of a sophist. That He
wrought miracles *might be learnt
from the Acts of Pontius Pilate*,
Matt. ix. 29–31, 32, 33, x. 1–8. fulfilling Isaiah xxxv. 4–6. Those Luke xviii. 35–43. Luke xi. 14 ff. Luke v. 17–26.
who from their *birth* were blind,
Matt. iv. 23. dumb, lame, He healed; indeed,
Matt. ix. 18 ff. He healed all sickness and disease, Luke viii. 41 ff.
and He raised the dead. *The Jews* Luke vii. 11–18.
ascribed these miracles to magic.

Jesus too (like John, *whose mission
ceased when He appeared in public*)
Matt. iv. 17. began His ministry by proclaiming
that the kingdom of heaven was at
hand. Many precepts of the Sermon
Matt. v. 20. on the Mount Justin has preserved,
[as, for example, those referring to]
Matt. v. 28. the righteousness of the scribes and
Matt. v. 29–32. Pharisees, the adultery of the heart,
Matt. v. 34–37, 39. the offending eye, divorce, oaths,
Matt. v. 44. returning good for evil, loving and
Matt. v. 42. praying for enemies, giving to those Luke vi. 30.
Matt. vi. 19, 20. that need, placing the treasure in
Matt. vi. 25–27. heaven, not caring for bodily wants, Luke xii. 22–24.
Matt. v. 45. but copying the mercy and goodness
Matt. vi. 21, etc. of God, not acting from worldly
Matt. vii. 22, 23. motives—above all, deeds, not words. Luke xiii. 26, 27.

Justin quotes sayings from the
Matt. viii. 11, 12. narrative of the centurion of Caper- Luke xiii. 28, 29.
Matt. ix. 13. naum and of the feast in the house Luke v. 32.
of Matthew. He has the choosing
Matt. x. 1 ff. of the twelve apostles, with the Luke vi. 13.
Mark iii. 17. name given to the sons of Zebedee,

Boanerges, or "sons of thunder,"
Matt. xi. 12–15. the commission of the apostles, the Luke x. 19.
discourse after the departure of the Luke xvi. 16.
Matt. xvi. 4. messengers of John, the sign of the
Matt. xiii. 3 ff. prophet Jonas, the parable of the
Matt. xvi. 15–18. sower, Peter's confession, the an- Luke viii. 5 ff.
Matt. xvi. 21. nouncement of the Passion. Luke ix. 22.

From the account of the last journey and the closing scenes of
Matt. xix. 16, 17. our Lord's life, Justin has the history
Matt. xxi. 1 ff. of the rich young man, the entry Luke xviii. 18, 19.
into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the Luke xix. 29 ff.
Matt. xxii. 11. temple, the wedding garment, the Luke xix. 46.
controversial discourses about the Luke xx. 22–25.
Matt. xxii. 21. tribute money, the resurrection, and Luke xx. 35, 36.
Matt. xxii. 37, 38. the greatest commandment, those
Matt. xxiii. 2 ff.
Matt. xxv. 34, 41. directed against the Pharisees, and Luke xi. 42–52.
Matt. xxv. 14–30. the eschatological discourse, the
parable of the talents. Justin's
account of the institution of the
Lord's Supper agrees with that of Luke xxii. 19, 20.
Matt. xxvi. 30. Luke. After it Jesus sang a hymn,
Matt. xxvi. 36, 37. and taking with Him three of His
disciples to the Mount of Olives,
He was in an agony, His sweat Luke xxii. 42–44.
falling in *drops* (not necessarily of
blood) to the ground. His captors
surrounded Him *like the "horned bulls"* of Psalm xxii. 11–14; there
Matt. xxvi. 56. was none to help, for His followers
to a man forsook Him.[1]
Matt. xxvi. 57 ff. He was led both before the Scribes Luke xxii. 66 ff.
and Pharisees, and before Pilate.
Matt. xxvii. 11 ff. In the trial before Pilate He kept

[1] Professor Sanday italicises this statement, as though it was not contained in the Gospels; but when our Lord was arrested, Matthew says, "Then all the disciples left Him and fled" (cap. xxvi. 56). Is not this the same thing?

Matt. xxvii. 14. silence, as *Psalm* xxii. 15. Pilate sent Him bound to Herod. Luke xxiii. 7.

Justin relates most of the incidents of the crucifixion in detail, for confirmation of which he refers to the *Acts of Pilate.* He marks especially the fulfilment in various places of Psalm xxii.

He has the piercing with nails, Luke xxiv. 40.
Matt. xxvii. 35. the casting of lots and dividing of Luke xxiii. 34.
Matt. xxvii. 39 ff. the garments, the *sneers* of the Luke xxiii. 35.
crowd (somewhat expanded from the
Matt. xxvii. 42. Synoptics), and their taunt, *He who raised the dead*, let Him save Him-
Matt. xxvii. 46. self; also the cry of despair, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and the last words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend Luke xxiii. 46. My spirit."

Matt. xxvii. 57–60. Matt. xxvi. 31–36. The burial took place in the evening, the disciples being all scattered in accordance with Zechariah iii. 7.

Matt. xxviii. 1 ff. On the third day, the day of the sun, Luke xxiv. 21. or the first (or eighth) day of the Luke xxiv. 1 ff. week, Jesus rose from the dead. He then convinced His disciples that His sufferings had been prophetically foretold, and they repented of having deserted Him. Having given them His last commission, they saw Him ascend up into heaven. Thus Luke xxiv. 50. believing, and having first waited to receive power from Him, they went forth into all the world and preached the word of God. To this day
Matt. xxviii. 19. Christians baptize in the name of the Father of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.

Matt. xxviii. 12–15. The Jews spread a story that the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the grave, and so deceived men by asserting that He was not risen from the dead and ascended into heaven.

There is nothing in Justin (as in Luke xxiv.; but cf. Acts i. 3) to show that the ascension did not take place *on the same day as* the resurrection.

It was no part of Justin's intention to give a regular narrative of our Lord's life; the references and allusions to it occur incidentally in the course of his two *Apologies*, and of his *Dialogue* with the Jew Trypho; and yet, when these references and allusions are drawn together, they constitute an account of our Lord's birth and the principal events connected with it; of His baptism by John and of John's preaching, imprisonment, and death; of our Lord's temptation, His miracles, His election of the apostles, His great discourses, His institution of the supper, His agony in Gethsemane, His crucifixion and resurrection, such as any of ourselves might write with the first three Gospels in our memory. The story which Justin knew is the story which we know.

You will have noticed that he has a few statements concerning our Lord which are not contained in any of our Gospels.[1] Of these, the account of the fire which was kindled on the Jordan at our Lord's

[1] These are italicised in the summary extracted from Professor Sanday.

baptism, and the words said to have been heard from heaven at the baptism, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee," instead of "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee am I well pleased," occur in some very ancient versions of Matthew and Luke, and represent early readings in those two Gospels. That our Lord worked as a carpenter and made "*ploughs and yokes*," may have been a tradition. So may the statement that the wise men who according to Matthew, "came from the east," *came from Arabia.* The statement that Herod ordered a massacre of *all* the children in Bethlehem was probably nothing more than a slip of memory. In whatever way these variations from the story contained in our own Gospels may be accounted for, it remains certain that the story contained in Justin's Gospels was the same as that which is contained in ours.

In Professor Sanday's summary of Justin's references and allusions to our Lord's history, there is no mention of any fact or of any teaching that appears in John's Gospel only. But I have already given one passage from the *First Apology* which, in my judgment, must have been drawn from John's account of our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus; there are other passages in the *First Apology* and the *Second*, and also in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, which seem to have been suggested by John's Gospel, and one very striking passage which must have been suggested by John's First Epistle.[1] As the Epistle seems to have

[1] In the *Dialogue*, cap. 123, Justin has, "We . . . are *called*

been a letter written to accompany the Gospel, a quotation from the Epistle is equal in value to a quotation from the Gospel. Further, Justin's doctrine concerning the Eternal Word is the doctrine which is expounded in the prologue to John's Gospel.

VI.

In Justin's own writings therefore there is decisive evidence that the Gospels which he himself used, and which were read in the Christian assemblies about the middle of the second century, were the Gospels of our own New Testament. But this conclusion is supported by evidence drawn from other sources. Tatian was Justin's comrade and friend; and Tatian's *Diatessaron*, as we have seen, was a "welding together" of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Is it credible that Tatian, who shared with Justin the perils of martyrdom, dropped the Gospels, which were written, as Justin says, by the apostles and the followers of the apostles, and used for his *Diatessaron* another set of Gospels of which Justin knew nothing?

Further: it was in A.D. 150 that these Gospels of which Justin speaks, and from which he quotes so large a number of passages, were read every Sunday when

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the true *children of God, and we are.*" In 1 John iii. 1, John has, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called children of God: and* such *we are.*" The "such" is inserted by our Revisers. The form of John's sentence, we are "called children of God: and we are," is very remarkable, and it is reproduced in Justin.

the Christians met for worship; about thirty-five years later Irenæus constructed an elaborate argument to prove that there must be four Gospels, and only four. By universal concession the Gospels which Irenæus used were the same as our own; if they were not the same as Justin's, what had become of the earlier narratives — narratives written by apostles and the followers of apostles? how did it happen that these ancient and more authentic narratives disappeared? how did it happen that they were replaced by documents of later origin and of inferior authority? how did it happen that no tradition or trace of the abandonment of the earlier Gospels and the acceptance of the later, no protest against the change, can be found in the writings of the men who were living when the change was effected?

The difficulty of answering these questions is enormously increased by the fact that the old Gospels — Justin's Gospels—were not mere private documents, a few copies of which were in the possession of Christian scholars, but public documents, read every Sunday in the Church assemblies. They were written —so Justin believed, and so his contemporaries believed—by the apostles and their followers; how did it happen that the Churches consented to the withdrawal of these authoritative and sacred narratives of our Lord's life, and to the introduction into the services of the Church of other narratives, written by other hands? Was there no doubt, no hesitation, about the authority of the new stories? Did no great

and ancient Church, proud of the traditions which it had inherited from its apostolic founders, resist the innovation? But if there was any protest against the new Gospels, any discussion of their superior claims on the affection and reverence of the Church, I ask again, how is it that not the faintest trace of the protest survived, and that within forty years of the time that Justin wrote his *First Apology*, the new Gospels had, not only secured universal acceptance, as having been written by Matthew and John, Mark and Luke, but had drawn to themselves religious reverence, as narratives which were covered by the authority of God?

If historical evidence has any conclusive force, it is certain that Justin's Gospels were the Gospels of Tatian, the Gospels of Irenæus, the Gospels of Tertullian, the Gospels of Clement of Alexandria, the Gospels in which we ourselves have caught the accents of a Divine voice and have seen the light of a Divine glory.

NOTE TO LECTURE ON JUSTIN.

In the *Spectator* for June 21st, 1890, there is a review of an American edition of the works of the late Mr. Bagehot. The editor appears to have given a great deal of pains to the correction of Mr. Bagehot's misquotations. Judging from the *Spectator* article, one begins to suspect that Mr. Bagehot's exact quotations may be as rare as Justin's, and his "variations," and even his "decided variations," as numerous. But Mr. Bagehot lived in a literary age, and when the literary conscience had a code of ethics which imposed the duty of quoting accurately. The *Spectator* gives two examples.

DICKENS.

"'It's always best to do what the mob do.' 'But suppose there are two mobs?' suggested Mr. Snodgrass. 'Shout with the largest,' replied Mr. Pickwick."

BAGEHOT'S QUOTATION.

"'Always shout with the mob,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'But suppose there are two mobs?' said Mr. Snodgrass. 'Then shout with the loudest,' said Mr. Pickwick."

CARLYLE.

"Their Amendment Act . . . was imperatively required to be put in practice. To create men filled with a theory, that refusal of out-door relief was the one thing needful: Nature had no readier way of getting out-door relief refused."

BAGEHOT'S QUOTATION.

"It was then above all things necessary that out-door relief should cease. But how? What means did great Nature take for accomplishing that desirable end? She created a race of men who believed the cessation of out-door relief to be the one thing needful."

Did Mr. Bagehot use what the critics would call "the original Dickens," which has mysteriously disappeared, and "the original Carlyle," which, strange to say, has had a similar fate? Are we to infer that our *Pickwick* probably attributes to Sam Weller a score of witticisms which Mr. Bagehot's *Pickwick* did not contain; and that probably the "chops and tomato" letter, and the famous trial of Bardell *v.* Pickwick, is a later growth? Are we also to infer that it is risky to attribute any startling passages in our *Chartism* to the real sage of Chelsea?

LECTURE XI.

MARCION.

I.

JUSTIN MARTYR, in his *First Apology*, written about A.D. 150, speaks of Marcion as "a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive and teaching his disciples to believe in some other God greater than the Creator." He had a large number of followers. Justin says: "He has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies." He travelled over many countries, and at the end of the second century his heresy was formidable and widely spread. At the end of the fourth century it still survived in Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Syria, Cyprus, and Persia.

Marcion lived a blameless, honourable, and austere life; and the Marcionites maintained the rigid morality of the founder of their sect. They practised a severe asceticism, abstaining from wine, from meat, and from marriage. They were of the same mind as Tertullian as to the crime of concealing their faith in order to escape persecution, and many of them suffered martyrdom for the name of Christ.

Their fundamental doctrine has an interest for us

even in these times. To Marcion there were two Gods. He found an irreconcilable contrast between the God revealed in the Old Testament and the God revealed in Christ. The God of the Old Testament was a just, but a relentless God. The law which He gave to men was equitable, but stern; it represents His own character and the principles on which He governed mankind: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The law of the God whom Christ has revealed is more gracious and more noble: "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"; and His law is the expression of His own merciful character and government.

The material universe and the human race were created, according to Marcion, by the God who was worshipped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and whose presence was revealed to their terrified descendants at Sinai by the storm-clouds, the lightnings, the thunders, the awful fire, the smoke which "ascended as the smoke of a furnace," and the agitation of the granite mountain, which trembled because He was near. He was the God whose prophets menaced the Jewish people with terrible punishments for their crimes, and who, when His patience was exhausted, swept them into exile and laid their country in ruins. He was a just God, but not good and gracious.

The miseries which were being inflicted on men in this life for their sins, the worse miseries to which they were destined in the life to come, touched the mercy of the Supreme. They were suffering justly,

but He pitied them. For thousands of years He had left the world and mankind in the hands of their Creator. He had concerned Himself about neither. But at last His heart was moved, and He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem the human race from the power of this just but merciless Deity. Our Lord, on this hypothesis, was not the Messiah of Jewish prophecy, but a Messiah of quite another kind ; He came for a wholly different work. He was not sent by the Creator of the world to give great secular splendour to His elect nation, but by the Supreme God, to deliver the human race from the evils which their Creator was righteously inflicting on them. The original apostles had therefore, according to Marcion, misapprehended the true nature of our Lord's mission. Never was a great teacher more flagrantly unsuccessful in making his mind clear to his disciples. The men who had lived with our Lord in the closest intimacy during His earthly ministry believed that He acknowledged the authority of their ancient Scriptures ; that He had come to fulfil the law and the prophets ; that He was revealing more fully the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob ; that He was the Christ for whose coming the Jewish race had been waiting and longing through many centuries of glory and of shame. This was their belief while He was with them ; and for this belief they perilled their lives after He had returned to the Father. But, according to Marcion, their belief was wholly false. He therefore rejected the authority of the original apostles

and of their followers. For him neither their Epistles nor their Gospels had any worth. They had continued to worship the God of the Jews as the Supreme God; they supposed that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah; to the last they were Jews rather than Christians.

But the Jews—and even many Christian Jews—had hated Paul as the enemy of their faith and their nation, and as a traitor to their sacred traditions, their inalienable prerogatives, and their immeasurable hopes. There was incontestable evidence that between Paul and Peter there had been grave differences of judgment as to the observance of certain Jewish customs. For Marcion, therefore, Paul was the true representative of the mind of Christ; Paul had discovered what the original apostles had missed — the irreconcilable antagonism between the old Faith and the new. His Canon of the New Testament was constructed on these principles. It consisted of two parts—"The Gospel" and "The Apostolicon." In the "Apostolicon" he placed ten of Paul's Epistles, rejecting the Epistles to Timothy and Titus;[1] his "Gospel" was the Gospel of Luke.

But even Paul's Epistles were hard to reconcile with the doctrine of Marcion concerning the God of the Old Testament, and he therefore mutilated them. He cut out, for example, the following passages from the Epistle to the Galatians: "Know therefore that

[1] The Epistle to the Hebrews he, of course, rejected.

they which be of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham" (cap. iii. 7); "That upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus" (cap. iii. 14); "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise" (cap. iii. 16–18). But no mutilations—had they been still more audacious than those on which Marcion ventured—could remove from Paul's Epistles the reverence with which the apostle of the Gentiles regarded the ancient revelation of God to the Jews; and the orthodox assailants of Marcion had no difficulty in showing that even the mutilated Epistles were destructive of the Marcionite heresy.

It was also necessary to mutilate the Gospel of Luke. According to Marcion, Christ was not born of a woman, with a body of flesh and blood like our own; for it was impossible that in Him there should be anything that was derived from what had been brought into existence by the Creator of the world and of mankind. His Gospel therefore began with the beginning of our Lord's public ministry: "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, God came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught on the Sabbath

day." The early chapters of Luke, which contain the account of our Lord's birth, His genealogy, His baptism, and His temptation, were omitted. There were also considerable omissions, which are not explicable, from later chapters in the Gospel.

The original text of Marcion's Gospel has been lost, but it has been reconstructed from Tertullian and Epiphanius, both of whom wrote against Marcionism. The assailants of Marcion contended that in the mutilated Gospel of Luke, as in the mutilated Epistles of Paul, enough was left to destroy the fundamental principles of Marcionism. They therefore had to quote and discuss Marcion's Gospel at great length; and from these quotations and discussions we can discover what it preserved of Luke's Gospel and what it rejected.

II.

There are two questions to be determined before we can draw any conclusion from Marcion's Gospel in support of the early origin of the Gospel of Luke: (1) Is it not possible that the two Gospels are two independent narratives, and may not the coincidences between them be explained by supposing that the two writers drew their story of our Lord's life and teaching from the same sources. Or, (2) If they are not independent narratives, is it not possible that Marcion's Gospel, instead of being a mutilated form of a more trustworthy narrative, is really the older document? In that case we should

have to speak, not of the "omissions" of Marcion but of the "additions" of our present Luke.

First, then, were the two Gospels independent works? This is not possible.

(1) Marcion contains practically nothing that is not contained in Luke. "The additions are insignificant—some thirty words in all—and those, for the most part, supported by other authority." With the exception of these thirty words and some slight alterations of phrase Marcion's Gospel is simply "an abridgment of our St. Luke."[1]

(2) The *order* of Luke's narrative is very different from the order of Matthew and Mark. Marcion's order follows Luke's.

"There is some disturbance and re-arrangement in the first chapter of Marcion's Gospel, though the substance is that of the third Synoptic; but from this point onwards the two move step by step together, but for the omissions and a single transposition (iv. 27 to xvii. 18)."

Out of fifty-three sections *peculiar* to St. Luke—from iv. 16 onwards—all but eight are found also in Marcion's Gospel. They are found, too, in precisely the same order. Curious and intricate as is the mosaic work of the third Gospel, all the intricacies of its pattern are reproduced in the Gospel of Mar-

[1] PROFESSOR SANDAY: *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 214. The chapter on Marcion is perhaps the most interesting and valuable in his interesting and valuable book. I have used it very largely in this Lecture.

cion. Where Luke makes an insertion in the ground-stock of his narrative, there Marcion makes an insertion also; where Luke omits part of the narrative, Marcion does the same.

In the very heart of Luke's Gospel (ix. 51 to xviii. 14) discourses of Christ are inserted without regard to chronological order. "This peculiarity is faithfully reproduced in the Gospel of Marcion with the same disregard of chronology, the only change being the omission of about forty-one verses from a total of 380."

(3) There are names mentioned by Luke which do not appear in any of the other Gospels,—Joanna, Susanna, Cleopas, and Zaccheus; "not only does each of the sections relating to these persons re-appear in Marcion's Gospel, but it re-appears precisely at the same place."

(4) A careful examination of the first three Gospels shows that the three Evangelists do not always agree in their account of the particular occasions and circumstances of some of our Lord's sayings and actions. For example, the words of our Lord, "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant,"—these words were spoken, according to Matthew and Mark at or near Jericho, when our Lord was on His way to Jerusalem to die; and they

were spoken to rebuke and quiet the indignation with which the other apostles heard that James and John, or their mother on their behalf, had asked Christ to promise them the thrones on His right hand and His left in His kingdom. Luke gives the impression that they were spoken during the Last Supper. There are other similar differences between the Evangelists, some of which those who have constructed "Harmonies of the Four Gospels" have found it difficult to adjust. Now it is remarkable that "where Luke has the other two Synoptics against him . . . Marcion has them against him too."

(5) Further, where Luke breaks off from Matthew and Mark, and leaves a gap in the story, Marcion leaves the same gap.

(6) "It has been noticed as characteristic of St. Luke, that where he has recorded a similar incident before, he omits what might seem to be a repetition of it. This characteristic is exactly reflected in Marcion, and that in regard to the very same incidents."

(7) "Then, wherever the patristic statements give us the opportunity of comparing Marcion's text with the Synoptic, and this they do very largely indeed, the two are found to coincide with no greater varieties than would be found between any two not directly related manuscripts of the same text."

The conclusion is irresistible. We must choose between the two alternatives. "Either Marcion's Gospel is an abridgment of our present St. Luke, or else our present St. Luke is an expansion by inter-

polation of Marcion's Gospel, or of a document co-extensive with it. No third hypothesis is tenable." The two Gospels cannot be independent works.[1]

But, secondly, if the two Gospels are not independent of each other, may not Marcion's represent the original document? In that case the passages contained in our Luke are additions by a later hand. The evidence against this hypothesis is conclusive.

1. We know that Marcion mutilated Paul's Epistles; he would hardly hesitate to mutilate Luke's Gospel. The passages which he omitted in the Epistle to the Galatians are inconsistent with the theory that the Creator of the world, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Jewish psalmists and prophets, was the God who sent the Lord Jesus Christ to save mankind. The early chapters of Luke are equally inconsistent with this theory. The reasons which led him to mutilate the Epistle to the Galatians would lead him to mutilate the Gospel.

2. There are indications of a very striking and decisive character that the passages which Marcion

[1] The quotations in the preceding paragraphs are from Professor Sanday's *The Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 214–216. The sentences not marked as quotations contain either summaries of Professor Sanday's statements or explanatory matter introduced for the sake of readers who are not conversant with inquiries of this description. I have inserted the figures (1), (2), etc., to make the separate arguments more distinct.

omits must have come from the same hand as the main body of the Gospel which he preserves. Luke has a style of his own. There are words that occur with great frequency in the third Gospel, which occur very rarely, or not at all, in the other books of the New Testament. The writer has his peculiar phrases, and he has his peculiar forms of construction. He has peculiarities in his use of adverbs, of prepositions, of pronouns, and in the combination of participles. These characteristics of his style are, for the most part, not so obvious as to strike ordinary readers: to detect them requires exact and laborious examination. But the style of the passages omitted by Marcion is identical with the style of the rest of the Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles. Luke's Gospel contains 309 verses which are absent from Marcion's: "In those verses there are found 111 distinct peculiarities of St. Luke's style, numbering in all 185 separate instances; there are also found 138 words peculiar to or specially characteristic of the third Evangelist with 224 instances. In other words, the verified peculiarities of St. Luke's style and diction . . . are found in the portions of the Gospel omitted by Marcion in a proportion averaging considerably more than one to each verse." [1]

It would not be difficult for a man of literary skill to write passages which might pass for Dr. Johnson's;

[1] PROFESSOR SANDAY: *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 229.

it would be less easy to produce half a dozen paragraphs that could be mistaken for Gibbon's ; and still less easy to achieve an ease, transparency, and grace that might be mistaken for Mr. Froude's ; but for one author to write passages in imitation of another, which would stand the tests of concordance and grammar that have been applied to the "omitted" passages of Luke, would require—if possible at all—an artist of almost miraculous skill. There are no grounds for supposing that any Christian scholars in the middle of the second century subjected the style of Luke or of any other New Testament writer to the kind of scrutiny to which it has been subjected by the modern scholars of Germany and England ; and in the absence of the results which such a study yields, no imitator could have reproduced the peculiarities of Luke as they appear in those passages of our third Gospel which are absent from the Gospel of Marcion. Which then is the more probable alternative? Did some unknown writer in the second century work a literary miracle? Or did Marcion, who mutilated the Epistles of Paul, mutilate the Gospel of Luke? Hesitation is impossible. The Gospel of Luke is the original document ; Marcion's is a mutilated abridgment.

III.

In A.D. 150, according to Justin, Marcion had disciples in many countries. He must, therefore, have been teaching for many years. There is a general

agreement that he was teaching his heresies in Rome about A.D. 139–142. Very early in his assault on the traditional faith of the Church he must have found it necessary to give his disciples a life of our Lord. His Gospel was probably published as early as A.D. 140, perhaps earlier ; and as Marcion's Gospel was a mutilated abridgment of Luke's, the date of Luke's must have been earlier still.

But how much earlier? Professor Sanday has given a very striking answer to this question. Before the invention of printing, books had to be copied by hand. If the first copyist of the original manuscript made a few mistakes, these mistakes would probably be reproduced with errors of their own by the writers who copied from him. The second man who copied the original manuscript would probably make another set of mistakes, and these also would be reproduced, with errors of their own, by the writers who copied from him. And the same thing would happen in the case of the third, the fourth, and every later copyist of the original. It is the business of those who study what is called the criticism of the New Testament texts to examine and compare the various readings of different ancient manuscripts. They also examine and compare the various readings found in the quotations from the New Testament which occur in ancient Christian writers, and from these they are able to discover the readings of the manuscripts which were used by these writers. As the result of this examination, they can ascertain,

sometimes with practical certainty, sometimes with a high degree of probability, what manuscripts and what readings have a claim to be regarded as the more ancient. They can trace, so to speak, the pedigree and history of the various readings.

Now Professor Sanday, who is an authority in this curious province of learning, says: "If Marcion's Gospel was an extract from a manuscript containing our present St. Luke, then not only is it certain that that Gospel was already in existence, but there is further evidence to show that it must have been in existence for some time."[1]

"In the year 140 A.D. Marcion possesses a Gospel which is already in an advanced stage of transcription —which has not only undergone those changes which in some regions the text underwent before it was translated into Latin, but has undergone other changes besides";[2] that is, our Gospel of Luke must have passed through the hands of a succession of copyists before the text came into the condition in which Marcion used it. There is no direct evidence, says Professor Sanday, of the antiquity of the earth; but the geologist judges by the fossils—the relics of an extinct age—which he finds imbedded in the strata; so here, in the Gospel of Marcion, do we find relics which to the initiated eye carry with them their own story.[3] Marcion's Gospel was derived from Luke's; but the text of Luke which Marcion used—this is

[1] Pages 230, 231. [2] Page 238. [3] Page 236.

Professor Sanday's argument—must have had "a long previous history, and the manuscripts through which it was conveyed must have parted far from the parent stem."[1] Luke, therefore, must have been originally written a long time before A.D. 140.

Only scholars who have studied the criticism of ancient texts can form an independent judgment of the validity of this kind of evidence; and only geologists can form an independent judgment on the geological evidence for the antiquity of the earth. Most of us have to accept the fact of the earth's antiquity on the authority of geologists; and this particular argument for the antiquity of Luke's Gospel must rest, for most of us, on the authority of critical scholars. Professor Sanday's authority has great weight.

IV.

Marcion's Gospel omits, as I have already said, the early chapters of Luke's Gospel. Perhaps to some of you it may appear that these chapters, with their story of angelic appearances and of prophecies uttered by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, by Mary the mother of our Lord, and by the aged Simeon, give a mythical character to all that part of the narrative. You may feel half inclined to believe that though the rest of the Gospel may contain an early and authentic account of our Lord's history and teaching, these chapters must preserve

[1] Page 236.

the popular legends of a later generation, or must have been the deliberate invention of a later writer.

But examine their contents, and ask whether it is conceivable that they were invented by a Christian writer in the middle of the second century, or even in the earliest years of the second century; and ask, too, whether it is conceivable that popular Christian legends could have taken this form?

What strikes me in these chapters is that they show no trace of those great discoveries concerning the true glory of Christ which came to the Church after our Lord's return to the Father. In the words of the angel to Zacharias about the mission of the son that was to be born to him in his old age, and who was to go before the face of God and "make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him," there is nothing that passes beyond the old horizons of Jewish hope and prophecy. There are the same limitations in the words of the angel to Mary about the destiny of the child who was to be at once her own Son and the Son of God. Nor in the song of Mary herself, in answer to the congratulations of Elizabeth, is there any premonition of the revelations of the glory of Christ which appear in the apostolic epistles. Zacharias "was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied": but his prophecy is the prophecy of a devout Jew, who saw, in the approaching advent of the Messiah, the fulfilment of the oath of God to Abraham, the restoration of the throne of David, the deliverance of the Jewish race from their enemies and from the

hand of all that hated them. With these external and national deliverances there was to be a great ethical and religious reformation; but the whole of the prophecy, in its substance as well as in its form, is Jewish. Even Simeon's thanksgiving, in which Christ is described as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" as well as "the glory" of God's people Israel, is also Jewish; it is the echo of some of the noblest of ancient Jewish prophecies; it shows no trace of the influence of the new spirit and the new modes of thought which were created by the Christian Gospel.

On the hypothesis that Marcion's Gospel represents the original document, these chapters were a later insertion. We are required to suppose that some Christian writer in the second century composed these psalms and prophecies and angelic communications concerning the birth of Christ, and that he excluded from them every characteristic Christian element, everything that could distinguish them from the visions of the greatness of the Messiah which came to ancient Jewish prophets many centuries before. Is that conceivable? Would it have occurred to a Christian writer to practise that exclusion? Would it not have been natural for him to assume that, when an angel came to announce to Zacharias the birth of the forerunner of the Messiah, and to Mary the birth of the Messiah Himself, the angelic message would be penetrated with at least some rays of that splendour which did not break upon

the common world till after our Lord's resurrection and ascension? Would it not have been natural for him to assume that Zacharias, Simeon, and Mary, the mother of our Lord, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, must have had clearer visions of the true glory of Christ than had come to the ancient prophets of Judaism?

There would have been nothing to *invalidate* the authenticity of the narrative if the messages attributed to the angel, and in the prophecies and psalms attributed to Zacharias, Simeon, and Mary, there had been these large anticipations of the new Christian conception of the Divine redemption and the Divine kingdom. The absence of these anticipations is a strong, and to some minds will be a decisive, proof of the historic truth of the story. That it was necessary to exclude them would never have occurred to a Christian writer who was *imagining* what might have been said about the advent of Christ by an angel and by devout persons speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. If he had tried to exclude them, he could hardly have done it. It is still less conceivable that these anticipations of maturer Christian knowledge could have been excluded from legends which had been created by the devout imagination of the commonalty of the Church.

The angelic messages, the psalms, the prophecies which are preserved in the two first chapters of Luke, give strong internal confirmation to the historical

trustworthiness of this part of the narrative. The new revelation had not been made when Christ was born; and neither the messages of the angel Gabriel nor the prophecies and psalms of devout persons under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost anticipate it. The profound consistency between all that is contained in these two chapters and the actual stage of the development of Divine revelation at the time to which they refer, is beyond the reach of both accident and art. Its only explanation is the simplest one: the writer had learnt what was actually said by the persons whose words he professes to record.[1]

[1] The argument in the text for the genuineness of the first two chapters is sustained by the evidence from style. "In the principal omission—that of the first two chapters, containing 132 verses—there are 47 distinct peculiarities of style [*i.e.* peculiarities characteristic of the Gospel generally] with 105 instances; and 82 characteristic words with 144 instances." —SANDAY: *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 229.

LECTURE XII.

PAPIAS.

THIS evening I shall speak to you of a man who knew some, perhaps many, of the friends of the apostles, and who knew two of the original disciples of our Lord. That the apostles had friends whose names are not mentioned in the New Testament, friends whom they loved, and who loved them, has perhaps never occurred to some of us. And we may not find it easy to give a place in our imagination to the forgotten men and women with whom Peter, James and John, Andrew, Philip, Matthew, and the rest used to dine; in whose houses they were guests for days and weeks together; whose children they nursed and prayed for; whose misfortunes, illnesses, bereavements filled them with anxiety and sorrow, and in whose health and happiness they rejoiced; to whom they used to give accounts of the discourses of our Lord and of His miracles; and of Mary His mother, and of Lazarus and Martha and Mary of Bethany; of the desolation and terror of the night in which He was betrayed; the awful darkness which fell on the world while He was hanging on the cross;

the wonder and the doubt with which they heard in the early morning the first news of His resurrection, and their perfect blessedness when He appeared to them in the evening.

Not very many years ago there were people to whom it was wonderful that any one they knew should leave England, and, after a few months' absence, should return and tell them what he had seen in the Holy Land. It seemed very strange that a man living in the next house had walked in the streets of Jerusalem, had stood on the Mount of Olives, had seen Bethany and Bethlehem, had sat by Jacob's well, had been in a boat on the Lake of Gennesareth. It gave them a shock. For Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, Bethany, Bethlehem, Jacob's well, and the Lake of Gennesareth seemed to belong to another world than that which is visited by the light of the common day. They were visited in hours of devout thought. They were separated by a great mystery from the ordinary paths of men. A glory transfigured them. It was not possible to think of them as we think of Geneva and Mont Blanc and the Lake of Lucerne. With some perhaps this feeling still lingers.

In the same way, the apostles seem to some of us to have no other place than in the New Testament. They lived with Christ during His earthly ministry. They knew people whose names are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles and in the apostolic Epistles. But to the imagination they are separated

from all the rest of mankind. It is forgotten that Paul must have had innumerable friends in Philippi, in Thessalonica, in the towns of Galatia, in Corinth, in Ephesus, in Rome—friends, who for twenty, thirty, or even forty years after his death must have had many things to say about him and his teaching. It is forgotten that the other apostles must also have had innumerable friends in different parts of the world, who transmitted to the next generation the substance of the story of Christ as they had heard the apostles themselves tell it, and the substance of apostolic doctrine. Papias, as I have said, knew men who were friends of the apostles; and he knew two men, who, though they were not apostles, had known Christ.

I.

He was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the first half of the second century. Hierapolis—it is now in ruins—lay a few miles north of Laodicea and about one hundred miles east of Ephesus. A Christian Church was formed there in very early times, and it is mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 13). It is probable that Papias was born between A.D. 60 and A.D. 70; his book, entitled *An Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*, was probably published about A.D. 135.

He had excellent opportunities for knowing men who had known the apostles. For the Apostle John lived in Asia Minor during most of the thirty years

between the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and his death at the end of the century, and he must have been well known to a large number of the ministers and members of the Churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Laodicea. Hierapolis, and the other great cities of the province. Ephesus was his usual home; there he died, and there he was buried. In the time of Eusebius there was a tomb at Ephesus which bore his name, and which was regarded by the Christians with affection and veneration.

According to a tradition which seems to be trustworthy, the Apostle Andrew went with him into Asia Minor. You remember the earliest notice that we have of these two friends. Both John and Andrew were disciples of the Baptist, and they were with their master on the banks of the Jordan when he delivered his great testimony to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God." The rest of the day they spent with our Lord, and they were His first disciples. Till they died, the memory of those great hours must have bound their hearts together in unperishable love.

The Apostle Philip, the friend of Andrew, settled in Hierapolis. Papias knew his two daughters, and recorded in his *Exposition* what Eusebius describes as a "wonderful narrative," which he had heard from them. Among the older members of the Church there must have been many who had known Philip himself intimately. Papias also met persons who had known several others of the apostles.

In his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord* he made

use of what the friends of the apostles had told him. In what seems to have been a letter addressed to a friend to whom the book was dedicated he says:

"I will not scruple also to give a place . . . along with my *interpretations*, to everything that I learnt carefully and remembered carefully in time past from the elders, guaranteeing their truth.[1] . . . On any occasion when any person came [in my way] who had been a follower of the elders, I would inquire about the discourses of the elders—*what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip; or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew*, or any other of the *Lord's disciples*, and what Aristion and the Elder John, *the disciples of the Lord*, say. For I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice."

This is the account which Papias gives of the method he follows in his *Exposition*. The work itself, which appears to have been a considerable one, has been lost; nearly all the brief fragments of it which remain have been preserved by Eusebius and Irenæus, the most valuable of them by Eusebius. The latest trace of the existence of the book itself is in an inventory of the possessions of the cathedral at Nismes, dated A.D. 1218. As the *Lectures* of Ephraem and the *Diatessaron* of Tatian have been recently recovered, after having been lost for many centuries, the *Exposition* of Papias may also be recovered, and it would be more valuable than either of them.

[1] He means that he himself assured his friend of the accuracy of his reports of what the elders had told him.

His reference to "Aristion and the Elder John" is rather obscure. The sentence is clumsily formed. It might convey the impression that, as he had learnt from the friends of the apostles what the apostles had said, he had also learned from the friends of Aristion and the Elder John what these two immediate disciples of our Lord had said. But this was not his meaning. He tells us that he had inquired and carefully considered what was *said* by the apostles; but when he comes to "Aristion and the Elder John," he changes the tense from the past to the present, and tells us that he had considered as carefully what these two men *say*. And Eusebius, who had the complete work of Papias in his hands, states distinctly, on Papias's own authority, that Papias himself knew Aristion and the Elder John, so that he had no need to rely on their friends for reports of what these two men had said about Christ.

It appears therefore that (1) Papias knew men who were friends of many of the original apostles; that (2) he knew two women who were daughters of the Apostle Philip; that (3) he knew two men who were immediate disciples of our Lord; that (4) he had tried to learn from all these persons what they could tell him about Christ and about what had been said by the apostles about Christ; and that (5) he had used what they had told him in his *Exposition*. He may not have been a man in whose critical judgment we could place any great confidence; some of the traditions of our Lord's sayings which he records

may have the faults of all similar traditions, and may be wholly untrustworthy ; but, as I think I shall be able to show, the evidence which can be drawn from him in support of the historical truth of the first three Gospels is of decisive weight.

II.

He wrote an *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord.* What he meant by "Oracles of the Lord," or, as Dr. Lightfoot sometimes translates the phrase, "Dominical Oracles," appears from his own account of Mark's Gospel, a part of which I will now quote ; it will be necessary to quote the whole passage later on. He says that, according to "the elder,"

"Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order *what was either said or done by Christ.* For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him ; but afterwards, as I said, [attended] Peter, who adapted his instruction to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's *Oracles* [or *Discourses*]."

There is a various reading in the Greek text of the last words of this passage. Some authorities give "Oracles," others give "Words," or "Discourses" ; but the most recent critical editor has adopted "Oracles."[1] If this is the true reading, then Papias

[1] LIGHTFOOT : *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion."* If the other reading is adopted, the argument in the text is not substantially weakened. The later statement—that Mark did not intend to give "a connected account of our Lord's Discourses," or "Teaching"—must cover the same ground as

describes Mark's work as "an *account* of *the Lord's Oracles*"; and Papias's own book is an *exposition* of the Lord's "Oracles";[1] that is, an exposition of "what was said or done by Christ." The word Gospel had not yet come into use as the title of a narrative of our Lord's Life.

It was an *Exposition* of Oracles of the Lord, not an independent account of our Lord's life and ministry. Side by side with his own interpretations he quoted what the apostles themselves had said about our Lord and our Lord's teaching to persons whom he knew. The daughters of Philip may have told him many things which they had heard their father say about Christ—about His doctrines and about His precepts. So that if the book is ever recovered, we may find in it Philip's own explanation of the singular emphasis in the question addressed to him by our Lord after the Last Supper: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? . . . How sayest *thou*, Show us the Father?" as though there was something exceptionally surprising in *Philip's* failure to recognise the Divine glory of his Master, and implying that a

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the earlier statement that he did not record "in order what was either said or done by Christ"; and an exposition of the "Oracles" must cover at least as much ground as an account of the "Discourses" or "Teaching."

[1] The phrase in Papias's account of Mark's Gospel is the same as that in his own title. Mark wrote an account of the *Dominical Oracles*. The other reading would, of course, give *Dominical Discourses* or *Teaching*.

similar failure in Matthew or any of the others would have occasioned our Lord a less keen disappointment.

III.

We return now to his account of Mark's Gospel, and I will give the whole passage as it stands in Eusebius.

"And the elder said this also: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said, [attended] Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles [or discourses]. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein."[1]

That you may estimate the real importance of this testimony, I must remind you once more that Papias had known men who were the personal disciples of seven of the apostles—of John, of Matthew, of Andrew, of Peter, of Philip, of Thomas, of James. When he met them he used to ask them what the apostles had said about our Lord. He knew two daughters of the Apostle Philip; they belonged to the Church of which he was bishop, and they lived to a great age. He also knew two men who were immediate disciples of our Lord. With all these

[1] EUSEBIUS: *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii., cap. 39.

sources of information concerning our Lord's life and teaching, he declares that the Gospel of Mark is an authentic narrative. It is certain, therefore, that our second Gospel, in its substance, contains the very story that was told by the original apostles. These, and such as these, are the miracles which they declared that Christ had worked. These, and such as these, are the discourses which they said that Christ had delivered. Men whom Papias knew had heard the story of Christ from the apostles; Papias asked them about it, and Papias says that Mark has preserved the story which was told by Peter. If Peter and the other apostles had told a different story, is it possible that Papias could have believed that Mark recorded the story told by Peter? The two daughters of the Apostle Philip were living in the city where Papias lived, were members of the Church of which Papias was bishop; is it credible, if Mark's Gospel contained a different account of Christ from that which these women had heard from their father, that Papias would have said that "Mark made no mistake." Aristion and "the presbyter John" were surviving representatives of the first generation of Christians, disciples of our Lord Himself; is it credible that Papias, who knew them and who talked to them about their Master, would have accepted Mark's Gospel, if Mark's account of our Lord had not been in substance the same as theirs?

IV.

Papias also tells us something about Matthew's Gospel. He says:

"So then Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could."[1]

All that I have said in connexion with the testimony of Papias to the second Gospel might be repeated in connexion with his testimony to the first. It is not credible that Papias, who knew men that were friends and disciples of seven of the original apostles, who knew two women who were the daughters of one of them, who knew two of the original disciples of our Lord, would have received the first Gospel as Matthew's if it had contained a story which, in its substance, was not the same as that which the apostles themselves had told.

V.

But this is not an adequate statement of the real strength of the evidence contained in the passages which I have quoted from Papias. The historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels does not rest on the sagacity or the knowledge of individual men. It is not the judgment of Papias himself, whatever materials he may have had for forming it, that makes his testimony important. It is apparent that while friends, disciples, and children of the apostles were still

[1] EUSEBIUS: *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii., cap. 39.

living, and while some who had known Christ were still living, our first and second Gospels were received —and received with their consent—as containing true accounts of our Lord's ministry. The friends and disciples of apostles received them as containing in substance the story which they had heard the apostles tell; the children of an apostle received them as containing the story which they had heard their father tell; men who had known Christ received them as containing in substance the story of Christ which they had known from the beginning—had known, in part, from what they themselves had heard and seen, in part from what had been told them by their friends, who had seen miracles which they did not see, and heard discourses which they did not hear. Whether, according to the information which Papias had from "the elder," Mark wrote the second Gospel or not is a matter of secondary importance. Whether Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in Hebrew is a matter of less importance still. The main point is this: the generation of Christians that heard the story of Christ from the apostles, some men who had known Christ Himself, received our first two Gospels as containing a true account of what our Lord had said and done. After the lapse of nearly eighteen hundred years I see them standing before me—men who had known John, and Matthew, and Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Thomas, and James,—the daughters of Philip—men who themselves had seen and heard our Lord; and as they point to these two

Gospels, I hear them say, "These books contain the story of the mighty works and gracious teaching of Christ, 'even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.'" I require no stronger evidence. For myself I am satisfied. In the Gospel of Matthew and in the Gospel of Mark I am sure that I have, in substance, the story which was told by the original apostles.

VI.

At this point we are met by, I will not say a plausible or ingenious, but a very audacious objection. We are asked to believe that the original Mark, the Mark of Papias, the Mark whose historical trustworthiness is so strongly authenticated, has vanished; has vanished we know not how; vanished we know not exactly when; and that another Mark has taken its place; that if we had the Mark of Papias, something might be said for the trustworthiness of its story; but that our Mark is another and a later document.

Of course some reasons are given for this startling theory. We are assured that since Mark's Gospel omits many most interesting facts about Peter which are contained in the other Gospels, Mark could not have obtained his materials from Peter's preaching. We are reminded that our Mark is just as orderly in its arrangement as Matthew and Luke, but that the Mark which Papias knew did not record "in

order" what was said and done by our Lord. And, further, it is argued that Mark's record of what he remembered of Peter's preaching must have been a more fragmentary narrative than that which is given in our second Gospel.

I do not very much care to reply to these objections in detail. I shall discuss presently the conclusion which is drawn from them. But it does not seem to me very surprising that a Gospel composed from materials supplied by Peter's preaching should place less emphasis than the other Gospels on the eminent position of Peter in the apostolic company, and should omit some things greatly to Peter's honour, and some things greatly to his discredit, which the other Gospels contain. As for the "order" of the second Gospel, it is not quite the same as Luke's, it is very different from John's; and Papias, after what he had learnt from the friends of the apostles or from the daughters of Philip, may have concluded that either Luke's arrangement or John's was better than Mark's. Or he may have come to the conclusion that none of the evangelists had followed the actual chronological order of the events of our Lord's history. That Papias gives the impression that the Mark which he had was more fragmentary than our Mark is an objection which hardly needs discussion.

It is also maintained that his account of Matthew's Gospel shows that he had quite a different Matthew from that which stands first of our four. Papias

describes Matthew's work as a collection of "Oracles" (*logia*), and we are told that this means a collection of our Lord's *discourses*; but our Matthew is not simply a collection of discourses, it contains a large amount of narrative matter. This limitation of the meaning of the word "Oracles" cannot however be maintained. When Paul says that the Jews were entrusted with "the Oracles of God,"[1] he means that they had the keeping of the whole of the sacred Scriptures, not merely the keeping of those parts of them which record words that came direct from the Divine lips; in bulk these form a very inconsiderable part of the Old Testament. When the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of "the first principles of the Oracles of God,"[2] it is clear that he is thinking of the principles of the Divine order which are implicated in the whole story of the relations between God and the Jewish people as recorded in their sacred books. Clement of Rome, writing in the first century, uses the phrase as synonymous with "the sacred Scriptures": "ye know, beloved, and ye know well, the sacred Scriptures, and have studied *the Oracles of God*."[3] Philo of Alexandria quotes as an "Oracle"[4] the narrative in Genesis iv. 15, "The Lord God set a mark upon Cain, lest any one finding him should kill him." Papias himself, as we have seen,

[1] Rom. iii. 2. [2] Heb. v. 12. [3] *Clem. Rom.* 53.

[4] LIGHTFOOT: *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 174. See the whole passage.

describes Mark's story of what was said and *done* by Christ as an "account of the Lord's Oracles."

The word "Oracles" covers both the discourses of our Lord and the account of His Birth, Temptation, Miracles, Death, and Resurrection.

The second objection to identifying our Matthew with the Matthew of Papias is more serious. He says that Matthew composed the Oracles "*in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could.*" It is maintained that this implies, not only that Matthew wrote his book in Hebrew—the Aramaic dialect spoken by the Jews in Palestine—but that in the time of Papias there was no authorized translation of it into Greek for the use of those who did not speak Aramaic; that to Papias therefore a Greek Matthew was unknown. This however is not a legitimate inference from his statement. He does not say, "Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one *interprets* them as he *can*," but "Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one *interpreted* them as he *could*." This implies that in the time of Papias it was no longer necessary that each man should interpret the Aramaic original for himself and "as he could"; there was already a Matthew in Greek. The legitimate conclusions to be drawn from the statement of Papias are these: (1) While friends and disciples of the original apostles were still living, and while some men were still living who had known our Lord, there was a Greek narrative of our Lord's life

and teaching which was accepted as Matthew's; (2) Papias had been told, on what he believed to be good authority, that this narrative was originally written in Hebrew.

It is this second inference which creates a difficulty, and a difficulty which has not, I think, received any satisfactory solution. There is a general agreement among scholars that our Matthew is not a mere translation of a Hebrew original. Dr. Lightfoot refuses to concede that "it cannot have been translated from the Hebrew at all," and he thinks that it would be nearer the truth to say that "it is not a homogeneous Greek version of a homogeneous Hebrew original."[1] The question resolves itself into the larger one which is raised by the coincidences and differences between the first three Gospels, a question which cannot be discussed in these Lectures.

VII.

Whatever may be the true solution of this last difficulty, the theory that our Matthew and our Mark are not the Matthew and Mark of Papias is untenable. It requires us to believe that a Gospel attributed to Mark, and supposed to preserve the account of our Lord's Life and Ministry given by

[1] LIGHTFOOT: *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 170. The question is fully discussed in Bleek's *Introduction to the New Testament*, and other similar works. See also Salmon's *Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament*, Lect. x.

Peter, was in common use among the disciples of Peter and John and Andrew when the second century began; that this was lost, and a different Gospel, supposed to be Mark's, was being read in the Christian assemblies in the middle of the century. As if the disappearance of one Gospel were not enough, we are required to believe that another Gospel shared the same fate. At the beginning of the century the Church had a narrative of our Lord's Ministry, which the immediate disciples and personal friends of the original apostles believed was written by an apostle, by Matthew. In the middle of the century it had still a narrative of our Lord's Ministry which was believed to have been written by Matthew; but we are required to believe that the first Matthew, the true Matthew, had slipped out of the hands of the Church, and that another Matthew, a false Matthew—written we know not when, we know not by whom—had quietly taken its place. That within half a century two Gospels, each of them having such high authority, should have been lost, and that two others should have taken their place, and should have been regarded by all Christian Churches as the very Gospels that had fallen into disuse and disappeared within the memory of large numbers of living men, is extravagantly improbable.

It has been suggested that the original Matthew and the original Mark were never actually displaced, but that they were *gradually* changed by the addition of new and spurious narratives and discourses, until

at last they became practically new Gospels. This is an impossible theory. If copies of the Gospels had been in a very few hands between A.D. 100 and A.D. 150, and if a strong central authority had existed which could have controlled the additions made to the original text, the theory, though without a particle of evidence to support it, might not have been wholly incredible. But the Gospels were widely scattered; there was no central authority to control the interpolations and modifications of the text; and if this process of gradual change had gone on during fifty years, there would have been a countless variety in the contents of each one of the Gospels. One Matthew, one Mark would have contained twice as much as another; one would have contained large masses of material not found in another; for the growth would have gone on independently in different countries; and these differences would have survived in ancient MSS. and versions. But, as a matter of fact, no such differences exist. Here and there an interpolation may be detected, as in the case of the account of the angel who descended and troubled the water in the Pool of Bethesda; but that an interpolation can be *detected* shows that the MSS. preserve the Gospels as they were originally written; the errors of copyists and editors may be corrected by a comparison of copies; and the occasional interpolations, which, perhaps, generally arose from the transfer into the text of an explanation or an illustrative fact which some copyist had written in the

margin, are too few and too easily recognisable to be of any serious importance.

If our Gospels are not the same as the Gospels of Papias, the original Matthew and the original Mark have been lost—they have not *grown* into the Gospels which have inherited their name. Only the strongest evidence could make this theory of "growths" credible.

But all the evidence is on the other side. Papias wrote and published his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord* about A.D. 135. At that date it may be assumed that the Matthew and the Mark which were received by the Church when he made inquiries about them from Aristion and "the Elder John," from the disciples of Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Thomas, and James, and John, and Matthew, were the Matthew and Mark which were still received by the Church; for he was not writing about books which had been rejected or lost, but about books which in the year A.D. 135 were well known, and which were received as containing the authentic story of Christ. They must have been the same books that were known to the disciples and friends of the original apostles. But fifteen years later, when Justin wrote his *First Apology*, Gospels containing the same story as our Matthew and Mark were read every Sunday in the Christian assemblies. A few years later still, our Matthew and Mark had a place in Tatian's *Diatessaron*. How did it happen that, with one consent, and within so brief a period, the Churches all over the world parted with the true

Matthew and the true Mark? How did it happen that, with one consent, they put the same two new Gospels in the place of the two old ones, and attributed to them the authority and the honour of the two which had been rejected?[1]

Finally, Eusebius gives these statements of Papias about Matthew's Gospel and Mark's Gospel in fulfilment of his promise to indicate in his *History* whatever had been said about the canonical books by earlier writers.[2] Eusebius had in his hands the whole of the *Exposition* from which the statements are extracted. If the Matthew and Mark of Papias had been different books from the canonical Matthew and Mark, Eusebius could not have failed to discover it. The Matthew and Mark of Papias were the Matthew and Mark of Eusebius; and the Matthew and Mark of Eusebius—about this there is no dispute—are the Matthew and Mark of our own New Testament.

VIII.

In the fragments of this ancient writer preserved by Eusebius there are no references to either the Third or the Fourth Gospel. It does not follow that the *Exposition* itself contained no quotations from

[1] That the so called Gospel of the Hebrews could not have been the original of the Greek Matthew which was known to the Church in the second century, is conclusively shown in the tenth Lecture of Dr. Salmon's *Introduction*.

[2] See *ante*, p. 110.

these Gospels, or no comments upon them. You will remember that Eusebius did not propose to give mere *quotations* that he found in early writers, when these quotations were from books about whose authority there was no dispute; and the authority of none of the Four Gospels had ever been disputed. It was only when he found some interesting *statements* about the undisputed books that he proposed to give them a place in his history. What Papias had said about the relation of Mark's narrative to the preaching of Peter, and about the language in which Matthew's "Oracles" were originally written, seemed to Eusebius sufficiently interesting to be recorded. It is to be assumed that Papias had said nothing equally interesting about the Gospels of Luke and John.

But while, as a rule, Eusebius does not take any notice of mere *quotations* from books which were universally received, he sets the rule aside in the case of the First Epistle of John and the First Epistle of Peter, although these were among the undisputed books.[1] Accordingly he informs us that Papias "made use of testimonies from the First Epistle of John."[2] But if Papias used John's First Epistle, he must also have used John's Gospel; if he acknowledged the authority of the Epistle, he must also have acknowledged the authority of the Gospel. For the Epistle is a supplement to the Gospel; it de-

[1] See *ante*, pp. 110, 111.

[2] *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii., cap. xxxix.

velops the dogmatic and ethical contents of the Gospel; it illustrates and applies them; the two are inseparable; Epistle and Gospel are vitally and organically one.

IX.

The argument from Papias for the historical trustworthiness of the story of Christ contained in our New Testament is not yet exhausted. As I said earlier in this Lecture, the narratives of our Lord's life and teaching were not in his time called "Gospels"; or if that title was ever given to them, it was not in common use. Matthew's narrative he calls the "Oracles"; Mark's, an "Account of the Lord's Oracles." But "Oracles" was the title given to sacred books. To Paul the ancient Scriptures of the Jewish people were the "Oracles of God." To Philo, the great Jewish scholar of Alexandria, the narrative parts of the Old Testament, as well as the words of Jehovah, were "Oracles." To Clement of Rome the Jewish Scriptures were also "Oracles of God." When Papias gives this great title to the narratives of Matthew and Mark, he attributes to them the same dignity, the same authority, the same sacredness that was attributed to the books of the Old Testament. It is inconceivable that this was his private act. The title may have been given to the books by the personal friends and disciples of Andrew, and Peter, and James, and John, and Thomas, and Matthew; it was certainly given to them by those who had known

the friends of these apostles. Already these two narratives were not mere common books; they were "sacred Scriptures." Papias wrote an exposition of them, an *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord.* That books which commanded this affection and reverence among the friends of men who had known the original apostles—books to which they attributed so great an authority, books which they regarded as sacred Scriptures—should have been suffered to disappear within a single generation, leaving no trace behind them, and that they should have been immediately replaced by other books inheriting their names and inheriting their sacredness; that the Christian Churches in every part of the world, in Rome, in Carthage, in Alexandria, in Jerusalem, in Asia Minor, in Southern Gaul, should have silently consented to part with the old Gospels and to receive the new; and that they should all have believed that the new were the same as the old—this is impossible. Strip the theory of the infinite ingenuity, the learning, the brilliance of exposition by which its real nature and form have been concealed, and it ceases to be even arguable. The miracles recorded in the Four Gospels, these are credible; but the miracles which this hypothesis requires us to receive are incredible. For if it is true, then there was a suspension of some of the most ordinary and certain laws of human thought and conduct, a suspension extending over many years and operating in tens of thousands of men, belonging to different races and

living in many lands. This is asking us to believe too much; the demands of the new criticism are more exorbitant than the demands of the old faith. For myself, I cannot submit to them; and I therefore continue to believe that our Matthew and our Mark are the same Matthew and the same Mark that were regarded as "Oracles of the Lord," sacred Scriptures, by those who had known the friends and disciples of the original apostles. They contain in substance the story of Christ that was told by Peter, and James, and Andrew, and Philip, and Thomas, and Matthew, and John.

LECTURE XIII.

POLYCARP.

I.

POLYCARP, bishop of Smyrna, was martyred A.D. 155 or 156.[1] The proconsul urged him to deny his faith, and save his life: "Swear, and I will set thee at liberty; reproach the Christ." Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King, my Saviour?" I suppose that he meant to say that he had served Christ from his birth, and he was therefore born about A.D. 70. His parents were probably Christians; in any case he must have received baptism and been instructed in the Christian Faith in early childhood.

Only fifteen years before he was born—perhaps only twelve years—Paul's long stay in Ephesus had come to an end. In all the cities of Asia Minor the remembrance of the great apostle of the Gentiles was

[1] The date which has been commonly received is A.D. 166 or 167. The earlier date is the result of recent investigations. See LIGHTFOOT, *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* pp. 103, 104.

still fresh; and the parents of Polycarp, and his early religious teachers, may have received the Christian Gospel from Paul himself.

About the time of his birth, if, as I suppose, he was born in A.D. 70, the Apostle John, the Apostle Philip, probably the Apostle Andrew, and, with them, other men who were the immediate disciples of our Lord settled in Asia Minor.[1] John spent the greater part of the remaining years of his life at Ephesus. At John's death Polycarp was, at least, thirty years of age.

Polycarp had known John. You will remember the letter of Irenæus to Florinus, which I had occasion to quote in a former Lecture[2]—the letter in which he reminds his friend of the time when they listened to Polycarp together. "I can describe," says Irenæus, "the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how *he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures.*"

[1] See *ante*, pp. 223–225.

[2] See *ante*, p. 146.

When Ignatius passed through Smyrna on his way to martyrdom in Rome—about A.D. 110[1]—Polycarp was bishop of the Church in that city. He must then have been about forty years of age.

For the next forty years he was the most considerable of all the bishops of the Asiatic Churches; and towards the end of his life he travelled from Smyrna to Italy, to discuss with Anicetus, the bishop of Rome, the difference of practice between the Churches of Asia and the Churches of the West in relation to the celebration of Easter. During this visit, his testimony to the true Faith led many who had received the doctrines of Valentinus and Marcion to renounce their heresies. He was martyred, as I have said, in A.D. 155 or 156.

II.

Irenæus speaks of the epistles which he wrote to neighbouring Churches to confirm their faith, and to some of his brethren. Of these one only remains.

Soon after Ignatius left Smyrna, Polycarp wrote a letter—he "and the presbyters with him"—to "the Church of God sojourning at Philippi"; and this is the letter which has been preserved. It was written at the request of the Philippian Christians, and consists very largely of exhortations to the practice of

[1] The exact date is uncertain. "The earlier date assigned is about A.D. 107, and the later about A.D. 116."—LIGHTFOOT: *Essays*, etc., p. 59.

the Christian virtues, to steadfastness of hope and firmness of faith, to patience, to meekness, to brotherly love, to prayer, and to fasting. It contains warnings against covetousness, evil-speaking, false witness, and the spirit of revenge. There are exhortations addressed to presbyters, to deacons, to young men, young women, and widows; and they are cautioned against receiving the teaching of men who would draw them from the truth. There are some sorrowful sentences about Valens, who had been a presbyter of the Church, but who had fallen into sin. At the close of the epistle he tells the Philippians that he is sending them the letters which Ignatius had written to himself, and to the Church of Smyrna, and to some other persons or Churches; and he asks them to let him know anything that they had heard about Ignatius and those that were with him. Polycarp either knew or assumed that Ignatius had suffered martyrdom, but had received no certain information either about his sufferings or how he bore them.

The letter shows that Polycarp was a devout, earnest, and humble-minded man, very solicitous about the practical righteousness of those who bore the Christian name, and for the peace of Christian Churches; but it gives no proof of any considerable intellectual power, and is singularly destitute of originality.

He had been educated as a Christian from his childhood; and his memory was charged with the writings of the apostles. The letter is a short one;

it covers nine rather small octavo pages in Hefele's edition of the apostolic Fathers, and there are footnotes to every page; and yet Dr. Lightfoot finds "decisive coincidences with, or references to, between thirty or forty passages in the New Testament."[1] Dr. Charteris, in his *Canonicity*, makes what he calls the "quotations" and the "echoes" from New Testament writers much more numerous. By "echoes" he means passages in which the thought or phrase has evidently been shaped by the remembrance of some New Testament sentence.

Polycarp had a great admiration for "the blessed and glorious Paul," and reminds the Philippians of the Epistle which Paul had written to them; and there are definite quotations or distinct "echoes" of Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and of the two Epistles to Timothy. There is a striking "coincidence" with a passage in the Acts of the Apostles. There is a trace—not very decisive—of the Epistle of Jude. Peter's First Epistle had impressed Polycarp very deeply; the frequency with which he quotes it is remarkable.

He quotes our Lord as saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," in the precise form in which the words are given in Matthew xxvi 41 and Mark xix. 38, and there are other passages which recall our first three Gospels. For example, he

[1] LIGHTFOOT: *Essays*, etc., p. 94

charges the Philippians to remember what the Lord said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; *pity, that ye may be pitied;* with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again; and that blessed are the poor, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[1] This passage is made up from words of our Lord in Luke vi. 36–38, 20, and Matthew v. 10. There are other sayings of our Lord which are not given with any formula of quotation: "If we pray the Lord to forgive us, we also ought to forgive" (cap. vi.); "And if we suffer for His name, let us glorify Him" (cap. viii.); "Pray for them that persecute you and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be made manifest in all things, that ye may be therein perfect" (cap. xii.).[2] These are "echoes" rather than "quotations."

It is contended that as the first passage is given as an express quotation of what our Lord said,—"remembering what the Lord said, teaching"—and that as (1) there is no passage in our Gospels in which these words occur in the order in which Polycarp gives them, or in the precise form in which he gives them; and as (2) the words, "pity, that ye may be pitied," do not occur in our Gospels,—Polycarp

[1] Cap. ii. It has been pointed out that the words italicised occur in the First Epistle of Clement of Rome (cap. xiii.), but not in our Gospels.

[2] Compare Matt. vi. 14, *seq.*; v. 11, *seq.*; v. 44, 48.

must have used some other collection of our Lord's sayings ; and that therefore he did not recognise the authority of the Gospels in our canon.

But suppose that this passage contained a decisive proof that he used some collection of our Lord's sayings which has disappeared, or one of those narratives of what Christ had said and done and suffered which, according to Luke, "many" had drawn up, how does this affect the authority of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? We know that such "narratives" existed in the early days of the Christian Church ; they disappeared, because they were displaced by more complete and authentic Gospels. When Polycarp was a child and his Christian education began—he was ten years old in A.D. 80—he may have received his first instruction in the story of Christ from one of these earlier narratives ; he may have learnt long passages from them by heart ; and the words of our Lord, as he had learnt them in childhood, would occur to him more naturally than the words as they appeared in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, although he believed that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were more trustworthy. Those of us who have used the Revised Version of the New Testament ever since it was published, and who believe that it is much more accurate than the Authorized Version, which we used when we were children, find ourselves quoting the Authorized Version still when we are quoting from memory ; and in all probability we shall continue to quote it to our dying day. We know that, though

the later version is more accurate than the earlier, the substance of both is the same. And if Polycarp used some earlier narrative which has been lost, his quotations from it only confirm, as far as they go, the trustworthiness of our present Gospels. In the earlier narratives the teaching of our Lord is in substance the same as in the more authoritative narratives which displaced them.

I deny however that the quotation is a decisive proof, or a proof at all, that he used an earlier narrative. He has drawn together precepts of our Lord which enforce certain gracious Christian virtues, and he recalls certain promises which encourage those who are in trouble to bear their troubles with buoyant hopefulness. These precepts and these promises, he says, were spoken by Christ. Some of them he gives very much as they are found in one or other of our Gospels; others are given in substance, though the form is varied. He does precisely what Christian preachers are doing every Sunday. When we say that Christ has given us certain exhortations and promises, which we proceed to quote, we do not mean that He gave them in the order in which we quote them; and when we quote from memory, very many of us are certain to give them in a form different from that in which they are expressed in the Gospels. The remarkable formula with which Polycarp introduces the words of our Lord, all of which are taken from the Sermon on the Mount, "Remembering what the Lord said, *teaching*," recalls

the words with which the Sermon on the Mount is introduced by Matthew: "When He had sat down, His disciples came unto Him; and He opened His mouth, and *taught* them, saying," etc. He has blended into one sentence two separate Beatitudes; but his account, as tested by our Matthew and Luke, of the specific blessings which are promised to two specific classes of persons is perfectly accurate. Now that Christ has come they that *mourn* are to be *comforted*; the *meek* are to *inherit* the *earth*; they that *hunger and thirst* after righteousness are to be *filled*; the *pure in heart* are to *see God*; the *peacemakers* are to be called the *children of God*. But according to Luke our Lord declared that the *poor* are blessed, because theirs is the kingdom of God, and according to Matthew that the *poor in spirit* are blessed, because theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*. And according to Matthew He said, "Blessed are they that have *been persecuted for righteousness' sake*: for theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*." The kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven is promised by our Lord to two descriptions of persons; and it is to these same two descriptions of persons that, according to Polycarp, our Lord assures the same blessedness: "Blessed are the *poor*, and those who are *persecuted for righteousness' sake*: for theirs is the kingdom of God." And the words, "Pity, that ye may be pitied," are in substance identical with another beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful," or the pitiful: "for they shall obtain mercy," or pity. There is nothing in Polycarp's

quotation that requires us to believe that he did not use our Gospels.

He has one sentence which is almost verbally identical with 1 John iv. 3: "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist" (cap. vii.). And there is a phrase in which it is difficult not to recognise an echo of a phrase in the same chapter of the same Epistle. After quoting the words of Peter concerning our Lord, "who bore our sins in His own body on the tree," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," he adds, "but endured all things for us, *that we might live in Him.*" Surely there were vaguely present in Polycarp's mind the words of John (1 John iv. 9): "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we *might live through Him.*"

III.

But the letter contains no quotation from the Fourth Gospel. Nor can I find in it any proof that John's characteristic conception of our Lord, or John's characteristic theology, had exerted any power over Polycarp's religious thought and life.

The Christ of Polycarp is the Christ of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, not the Christ of the Fourth Gospel. The light and the fire which John brought down to the Church from the heights of God, of these the letter shows no knowledge; the light does

not shine there; the fire does not burn. Polycarp seems to have found what was most closely akin to his own life in the First Epistle of Peter. He had been powerfully influenced by Paul; but though he knew the Epistle to the Colossians and the Ephesians, there is as little trace of the loftier speculation of Paul as of the mystical theology of John. The letter gives me the impression that his Christian thought and life had received their definite form before he came under John's influence. He was thirty years old when John died; his intimacy with John may not have begun till he was twenty, or even five-and-twenty. He had been educated in the Christian Faith from his childhood; his conception of the revelation of God in Christ and the type of his religious character were already fixed. His intellect, as the letter shows, was of a very ordinary kind; after he reached manhood, he was not likely to reconstruct his religious thought under the influence of a new teacher. For John he had a deep affection and reverence; but his theology—at least, when he wrote his letter to the Philippians—was not Johannine. I shall have to recur to this fact later in the Lecture. It will have its place in the argument.

It may be said that Polycarp's letter is too brief for such large conclusions to be drawn from it. But the mystic thought of the Fourth Gospel and of John's First Epistle has a strange power. Wherever it finds its way it gives decisive proofs of its presence. It is like one of those strong perfumes which fill the house

with their odour. It is masterful in its authority. It governs speculation ; it adds a new quality to ethics ; it determines the whole development of the spiritual life. If Polycarp had been Johannine we should have known it.

John stands apart. There are regions of thought in Paul which extend to the very confines of the kingdom of John ; but John's kingdom remains his own. In the first three Gospels there are hints and suggestions of the Christ who stands revealed in the Fourth, but they are only hints and suggestions ; there are gleams of that transcendent glory, but the gleams are transient and faint.

There are other contrasts on which critics have insisted between the whole contents of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the contents of the Gospel of John. It is maintained that the chronology of our Lord's ministry as related by John is irreconcilable with its chronology as related by Matthew, Mark, and Luke : that according to the Fourth Gospel the principal scene of our Lord's ministry was in Jerusalem and the south ; according to the first three, on the shores of the Lake of Galilee and in other districts of the north : that the first three evangelists represent our Lord's teaching as having all the qualities that charm great crowds of uncultivated people, as being familiar, homely in its illustrations, rapid in its transitions, picturesque, piquant ; that according to John He delivered long, elaborate, and mystical discourses : that in the first three Gospels

our Lord's chief care is for good morals ; that in the Fourth He recurs again and again, in private and in public, to certain mysterious dogmas, as if these were of supreme importance, and is always asserting His Personal claims : that the contrasts are so vivid and the differences so profound, that if John has given a true account of our Lord's teaching, Matthew, Mark, and Luke have missed the very substance of it ; that there is one religion in the first three Gospels, and another in the Fourth. Finally, we are assured that, as the first three Gospels preserve, though with many legendary and mythical accretions, the true substance and method of our Lord's teaching, it is impossible that John or any other of our Lord's personal friends could have written the Fourth ; and that it was written in the second century by some unknown author, a man of remarkable genius, whose Christian Faith had been transformed by the mystical speculations of a daring philosophy, which had endeavoured to penetrate the secret of the eternal life of God.

The differences and the contrasts have been enormously exaggerated. The ethical perfection demanded in the Sermon on the Mount is impossible apart from that mysterious birth of the Spirit of which our Lord speaks in His conversation with Nicodemus, and that mysterious union with Himself which is illustrated in the parable of the vine and the branches. When He places His own personal authority over against the authority of the law of

Moses ;[1] when He calls to Himself all that labour and are heavy laden, and promises that He will give them rest ;[2] when He says that all things have been delivered to Him by the Father, and that no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him ;[3] when He declares that He will come in His glory, and all the angels with Him to judge the nations[4]—He claims a greatness as august and awful as that which is attributed to Him in the opening verses of the Fourth Gospel, and as that which is assumed by Himself in the discourse which He delivered and the prayer which He offered during the night of His betrayal.

IV.

But while the Christ of John is the Christ of the earlier evangelists, the differences and contrasts between his Gospel and theirs are obvious and striking. How do they affect the evidence for the historical trustworthiness of John's Gospel?

In the Lecture on Papias proof was given that our Matthew and our Mark were written and known and received as authentic while children and personal friends and immediate disciples of the original apostles were still living, while some men who had known Christ Himself were still living. These

[1] Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28.
[2] Matt. xi. 28.
[3] Matt. xi. 27.
[4] Matt. xxv. 31–46.

Gospels therefore contain in substance the story of our Lord's ministry which was familiar to the ministers and members of the Christian Churches in Ephesus and Smyrna and Colosse, and throughout Asia Minor. They contain the story which Polycarp had known from his childhood.

How then came Polycarp to accept the Fourth Gospel, if John did not write it, if it did not appear till some years after John's death? The differences between this new account of our Lord and the account which was given of Him in the Gospels with which he had been familiar for so long, were too strike ing to be missed. It contained a large amount of wholly new material—new miracles, new discourses, The new material was in many respects wholly unlike the old; the picturesque parables, the ethical precepts of the earlier Gospels, had disappeared and given place to long discourses, illustrating the deepest mysteries of the life of God and the life of man. How then, I ask again, came he to accept it? There is only one answer to that question. He knew that John wrote it, and it contained the very representation of our Lord that he had been accustomed to hear from John himself.

If the new Gospel had not been John's, Polycarp would have found nothing in its characteristic qualities to attract him. We have seen that, as far as we can judge from his Epistle to the Philippians, he was untouched by those religious and philosophical speculations which are supposed to have transformed the

original simplicity of the Christian tradition into the profound and mystical doctrine of the Fourth Gospel. His intellect was not speculative and adventurous, but practical. What he cared for was the traditional beliefs and plain Christian living. He was very little of a theologian. He was nothing of a mystic. He held fast by the simpler truths and duties of the Christian Faith, and delighted to recall the very words in which he had been taught them. With all his admiration for Paul, whose Epistles he knew so well, those transcendent regions of thought which are illustrated in the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians seem to have had no charm for him ; in his own Epistle to the Philippians there is no indication that he had ever visited them. Imagine such a man as this discovering that a Gospel had appeared under the name of John, a Gospel wholly unlike the Gospels he knew, a Gospel containing a representation of our Lord wholly unlike that which had been given by John himself during the years that he had been John's disciple and friend : the Churches of Asia would have rung with his denunciations of the fraud.

The stronger the contrasts, the profounder the differences, between the new story and the old, the more vigorous and vehement would have been Polycarp's hostility. Every fresh article in the elaborate indictment of the Fourth Gospel, on the ground that it differs from the first three, adds to the strength of the proof that, since Polycarp accepted the Fourth Gospel, John must have written it.

But I may be told that the force of this argument depends upon the assumption that Polycarp was accustomed to read the story of Christ in our Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and that with whatever satisfaction I may regard the proofs which I have given in previous Lectures that these Gospels were in common use, and were regarded as authoritative before the end of the first century, I have no right to take it for granted that the proofs will be equally satisfactory to everybody. It is possible—so it may be suggested—that our Matthew, Mark, and Luke are of later origin, and that to Polycarp they were wholly unknown.

I accept the suggestion for the moment; it adds fresh, though wholly unnecessary, support to an argument which seems to me already irresistible.

On this hypothesis the narratives of our Lord's life and teaching which were in the hands of Polycarp represented an earlier form of the Christian tradition than that which has been preserved in any of our Gospels. The devotion and imagination of the Church had not yet surrounded our Lord with the glory which appears in even our Matthew and our Mark, much less with the transcendent glory which transfigures Him in John. Those earlier narratives contained fewer and less impressive assertions of His personal greatness, attributed to Him fewer and less remarkable miracles and a simpler kind of teaching. On this hypothesis the Christ known to Polycarp, the Christ of whom he had heard and read from his child-

hood, was a Christ in whose earthly history there was even less of the mysterious, the supernatural, the Divine than in the Christ of our first three Gospels.

This is the hypothesis. How then, I ask again, are we to account for Polycarp's acceptance of John's Gospel? If the contrasts and differences between our first three Gospels and the Fourth are great, the contrasts and differences between these earlier narratives and the Fourth Gospel are greater still. It may sometimes be difficult for ourselves to believe that the Christ of John is the Christ of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but how was it possible for Polycarp to believe that the Christ of John was the Christ of these plainer and simpler narratives? Those who deny that the Fourth Gospel was written by John gain nothing by the hypothesis that Polycarp knew nothing of our first three Gospels. In that case his acceptance of John becomes still more impressive. That he did accept it is, in my judgment, absolutely certain.

V.

For if John did not write the Fourth Gospel, when was it written? Baur placed it as late as A.D. 170; but subsequent critics that deny the Johannine authorship have been unable to resist the force of the arguments with which that position has been assailed, and have placed it in A.D. 150 or 155, and even as early as A.D. 130.

Assume that it was written in A.D. 130. Irenæus

could hardly have been a hearer of Polycarp earlier than A.D. 135; he may have heard him as late as A.D. 150, but the more probable date is A.D. 145. For reasons which have been stated earlier in this Lecture, it seems to me certain that if a Gospel had already appeared attributed to John, but containing a representation of our Lord and of His ministry different from that which John had been accustomed ot give in his oral teaching, Polycarp would have denounced it vehemently. If it appeared as early as A.D. 130, Irenæus would have heard him denounce it. How could Polycarp have spoken of what he had heard from John about our Lord's miracles and teaching, without warning his hearers against the fictitious Gospel, claiming to be John's, which contained stories of miracles of which John had never spoken and discourses of our Lord wholly different in their substance and their form from those which John had been accustomed to repeat?

But assume that it was written after Irenæus had ceased to be a hearer of Polycarp. This does not lessen the real force of the testimony of Irenæus, if the Gospel appeared at any time before Polycarp's martyrdom in A.D. 155 or 156. For Irenæus was not the last of Polycarp's hearers, and even after he had gone to Lyons, the relations between southern Gaul and Asia Minor were so intimate, that if Polycarp had declared that the new Gospel could not have been John's, Irenæus would have been sure to hear of it.

Assume—though this is becoming impossible—that

the Fourth Gospel appeared after the death of Polycarp. Even this does not destroy the value of the testimony of Irenæus. That Irenæus believed that our Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John is certain ; there is no hint or trace in his writings that he had ever doubted it. But he had heard Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord ; he had heard him relate their words. "And whatsoever things he had heard from them *about the Lord and about His miracles and about His teaching*, *Polycarp*, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, *would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures*." Polycarp's recollections of what he had heard from John and the rest were "*altogether in accordance with the Scriptures*," and among these Scriptures Irenæus placed our Fourth Gospel. The vivid contrasts, the profound differences, between the Fourth Gospel and the first three give to this testimony immense weight. In Polycarp's recollections of John's teaching there must have been the same representation of our Lord as that which is contained in John's Gospel.

VI.

John, Polycarp, Irenæus,—these three, it has been well said, are inseparable, so inseparable as to constitute an indestructible argument for the historical trustworthiness and the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. But in these inquiries, carried on in the

silence and loneliness of libraries, we too easily forget that when the ancient books were written which we are reading in order to find traces of the existence and authority of our Gospels, there were thousands and tens of thousands of living men who could have told us very much more about what we want to know than we can learn by the most patient examination of these ancient writings. We unconsciously lapse into the habit of thinking that the historical trustworthiness of the story of Christ is built upon the scattered sentences which can be quoted from the writings of less than a score of ancient authors. The supports seem unequal to the weight which is placed upon them. But these scattered sentences which can be quoted are but hints and suggestions of the real argument, which is to be found, not in books, but in what must have been in the knowledge and faith of thousands and tens of thousands of living men and women.

Take, for example, the testimony of Irenæus about Polycarp, on which I have been saying so much in this Lecture. An extract, preserved by an ecclesiastical historian living in Cæsarea in the fourth century, from a letter written by a Christian bishop living in Lyons in the second century, seems a very slender thread on which to hang a conclusion of such immense importance as the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. But Irenæus and Polycarp represent an immense number of Christian people who were living in those times in many parts of the world.

Polycarp was not the only man who heard about the miracles and the teaching of Christ from the Apostle John. John died about A.D. 100; twenty, thirty, forty years later there were men still living, ministers of Churches, members of Churches, who could remember John and "the rest who had seen the Lord" just as distinctly as he could. Of this great company Polycarp is the representative. Their names are lost; but in their day they were loyal to Christ, and contended earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. While they lived they shared with Polycarp the defence of that conception of Christ and of that account of His ministry which they had received from John and other friends of our Lord.

From this generation, consisting of the friends and immediate disciples of John and of the rest who had seen Christ, the story of what our Lord had done and taught was transmitted to a still greater number of devout men, some of whom—many of whom—endured torture and died cruel deaths rather than deny Christ. This generation is represented by Irenæus. In A.D. 185, the year in which he published his work, *Against Heresies*, the Fourth Gospel had already secured its great and authoritative position; and it was universally attributed to the Apostle John. But in that year there could hardly have been a considerable Church in Asia Minor in which there were not many men and women who might have used his own words, and said that they could "describe the

very place in which the blessed Polycarp"—or some other friend of John—"used to sit when he discoursed, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching," he, the friend and disciple of John, "as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures." It is impossible that these men would have received the Fourth Gospel as the Gospel of John, that they would have allowed the Church to receive it, if its account of Christ, His miracles, His teaching, His personal greatness and glory, had not been identical in substance with that which they themselves had heard from John's personal friends and immediate disciples.

LECTURE XIV.

REVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT.

IN bringing this course of Lectures to a close, I invite you to recall the ground over which we have travelled together, and to review the main positions which I have endeavoured to establish.

I.

We began by inquiring why it is that the faith of the great majority of Christian people has not been shaken by the varied, incessant, and formidable assaults which in our time have been made upon the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures. It is commonly assumed that these ancient books are the very foundation of our faith in Christ, and that while their genuineness, their historical trustworthiness, and their inspiration are uncertain, faith is impossible. But during the last thirty or forty years it has come to be generally known that there are grave controversies concerning a large number of the books contained both in the Old Testament and the New; that men of great learning are of opinion that even the Four Gospels were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke,

and John, but by unknown authors, who constructed their story from the untrustworthy traditions of a later generation, or who deliberately wrote fictitious narratives in the interest of conflicting "tendencies" in the Church, tendencies which were at last reconciled by mutual concessions and compromises towards the close of the second century. While these controversies are undetermined, and the authority of great scholars can be appealed to on both sides, how is it possible for ordinary Christian people who know anything of the seriousness of the subjects in debate and the severity of the conflict to continue to believe in Christ?

My first answer to the question was this: That whatever may have been the original grounds of their faith, their faith has been verified in their own personal experience. They trusted in Christ for the remission of sins, and they have been liberated from the sense of guilt; for deliverance from sin and the chains of evil habits have been broken or loosened, and the fires of evil passion have been quenched or subdued. They trusted in Christ for a firmer strength to resist temptation and to live righteously, and the strength has come. They have received from Him —they are sure of it—a new life, a life akin to the life of God. They have been drawn into a wonderful personal union with Christ Himself; "in Christ" they have found God, and have passed into that invisible and eternal order which is described as "the kingdom of God." Whatever uncertainties there may

be about the historical worth of the four narratives which profess to tell the story of Christ's earthly ministry, their faith in Him is firm, because they know by their own experience that the Living Christ is the Lord and Saviour of men.

My second answer to the question was this: That there are Christian men who would say that the representation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels appeals, and appeals immediately, to all those elements and powers of life that give answer to manifestations of the presence of God. They believe in Christ because they see God in Him. They do not ask for proofs that He wrought miracles; He Himself is the great Miracle; He transcends all the miracles attributed to Him by the evangelists. Discussions about the age in which the Gospels were written and about their authorship are of secondary interest; if they were written by unknown men who belonged to the second, the third, or even the fourth generation of Christians, they preserve the substance and give a true account of His earthly history. The story they tell is no involuntary creation of passionate love; much less is it a deliberate invention. The life of the Eternal God is in it.

For these two reasons, critical and historical controversies do not destroy faith.

II.

This discussion reminds me of a passage in a book by Mr. Francis Newman which had a great

popularity forty years ago, though I suppose that it is now almost forgotten. The book assailed the dearest traditions of the orthodox and evangelical Churches, and yet there were devout Christians who found in it very much that seemed true and edifying. The passage of which I am reminded is rather long, but I will quote it, for I think that it will assist me to make clearer and more definite one or two of the principal positions which I have endeavoured to make good in these Lectures.

Mr. Newman says:

"If we form an *a priori* conception of the genuine champion of the Gospel from the New Testament, we shall say, that he is girt with the only sword of the Spirit, the living word of God, which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. In his hands it is as lightning from God, kindled from the spirit within him, and piercing through the unbeliever's soul, convincing his conscience of sin and striking him to the ground before God; until those who believe receive it, not as the word of man, but as, what it is in truth, the word of God. Its action is directly upon the conscience and upon the soul; and hence its wonderful efficacy; not upon the critical faculties, upon which the Spirit is powerless. Such at least was Paul's weapon for fighting the Lord's battles. But *when the modern battle commences*,[1] what do we see? A study table spread over with books in various languages; a learned man dealing with historical and literary questions; referring to Tacitus and Pliny; engaged in establishing that Josephus is a credible and not a credulous writer; inquiring whether the Greek of the Apocalypse and of the Fourth Gospel can have come from the same hand; searching through Justin Martyr and Irenæus,

[1] These italics are my own.—R. W. D.

in order to find out whether the Gospels are a growth by accretion or modification, or were originally struck off as we now read them; comparing Philo or Plotinus with John and Paul: in short, we find him engaged (with much or little success) in praiseworthy efforts at Local History, Criticism of Texts, History of Philosophy, Logic (or the Theory of Evidence), Physiology, Demonology, and other important but very difficult studies; all inappreciable to the unlearned, all remote from the sphere in which the Soul operates."[1]

When I first read that passage I was a very young man, and it made a deep impression on me. I could not shake it off. It perplexed me. In those days, though I had come to see that the Gospel of Christ is a direct appeal from God to what is deepest and most central in the life of man, my thought had not worked itself clear from the assumption that faith demands for its very existence adequate guarantees of the genuineness and authenticity of the Four Gospels. If I recall accurately my position at that time, I thought that all the other books, both of the Old Testament and the New, might be submerged under "sunless seas of doubt," and Christian faith remain, but that if the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels was lost, all was lost. And yet, if their authenticity was challenged, this criticism of texts, this history of philosophy, this discussion of the theory of evidence, this laborious search through Justin Martyr and Irenæus, this comparison of Philo and Plotinus with John and Paul, studies which, as

[1] FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN: *The Soul: its Sorrows and its Aspirations* (fourth edition), p. 151.

Mr. Newman says, are "all inappreciable to the unlearned, all remote from the sphere in which the soul operates," were necessary. Mr. Newman seemed to me wholly in the right when he insisted that the power of the true preacher of the Christian Gospel is the power of the truth and of the Spirit of God ; and yet it seemed that the preacher could do nothing until scholars, working through long and laborious years, in many difficult and obscure provinces of learning, had demonstrated the authenticity and genuineness of four ancient books. It looked as if critics must settle their differences before preachers could bring home to men the reality and glory of the Christian redemption.

But what are the facts? Has the Christian preacher ever been compelled to be silent until the controversies of scholars were closed? Has he ever had to rely on the authority of scholars for the substance of the Gospel of Christ? Has he ever been uncertain about it, because there were learned questions on which scholars were not agreed? How was it with the original apostles? They had known Christ for themselves during His earthly ministry, and they had seen Him and listened to Him after He had risen from the dead. They knew that He was near them still, and that in His power and grace they had passed into the light of God. What they had to tell men about the great things which Christ had done and taught while He was visibly present in the world, and about the greater things which He was

still doing, came from their own personal knowledge; it required no authentication from the rabbis of the Jews or from the philosophers of the Greeks.

How was it with their immediate successors, the preachers of the second generation of Christians? They had been taught the Christian Gospel by the apostles and disciples of our Lord; but that Gospel had been verified in their own experience. They too knew Christ for themselves—the risen, the glorified Christ. They had received from Him the remission of sins and the gift of the Divine life. They knew the mystery and the blessedness of translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son. They spoke to Christ, and He answered them. Through Him they had found God. The greatest things about which they preached were things which had passed into their own experience. They were not mere guardians of a tradition, but spoke as *witnesses*, and told men what they themselves had seen and heard of Christ, the Lord and Saviour of men.

It is true that for their knowledge of what our Lord had done and taught in Jerusalem and Galilee they had to depend on those who had known Christ "after the flesh"; but there were some passages of the story which commanded their faith, even apart from their confidence in the accuracy of the recollection and the personal trustworthiness of the men by whom the story was told—passages which shone in their own light, words which had a Divine accent and a Divine power. It was the same when the story

was fixed in the Gospels. The story rested on the authority of the original apostles of our Lord ; it was the story which the apostles had told ; and yet there were parts of it which, in a very true sense, were independent of apostolic testimony, and made an irresistible appeal to the faith of every man that knew for himself the glorified Christ, and had received the illumination of the Spirit of God.

The same conditions were repeated in the life and preaching of the third generation of Christians and the fourth. And in every new generation, from the time of the apostles to our own, the substance of the Christian Gospel has been verified afresh in the experience of penitents and saints. The true preachers of every new generation have been new and independent witnesses to the power, the grace, the glory of the Redeemer of men. They have spoken on the strength of their own knowledge. Even those of them who had the greatest reverence for tradition and authority would have been powerless, but for their direct vision of Christ, and their personal consciousness of the reality and greatness of the Christian redemption. Speaking broadly and generally, the actual experience of one generation creates, under God, the faith of the next. You and I received the Christian Gospel because men whom we knew and who spoke to us about Christ were vividly conscious that they had found redemption in Him ; and we ourselves must have a vivid consciousness of redemption in Him if we are to transmit the Christian Faith

to those who will come after us. The Divine fire passes from hand to hand, from living men to living men. This is the general law. It has rarely to be rekindled from the torches of an earlier age.

The books which record the earthly life of our Lord—a treasure of infinite worth to the Church and the human race—have been held sacred, partly because the tradition has been transmitted from generation to generation that they contain the story of our Lord which was told by His original apostles, partly because very much of the story has in it a certain wonderful power which commands faith and exerts a gracious but regal authority over the central elements of the spiritual life.

But what is to happen when their historical trustworthiness is assailed by scholars, who use all the resources of ingenuity and learning to destroy their authority? What is to happen when it is alleged that there is no decisive proof that all the Four were in existence before the later years of the second century; that the sayings of our Lord, as quoted by earlier Christian writers, vary so much from His sayings as given in our Gospels, that the quotations must have been derived from narratives which have wholly disappeared; that the Fourth Gospel differs so widely in style from the Apocalypse that both books cannot have been written by the same author, and differs so much from the first three, that if *they* are historically trustworthy, it must be a theological fiction?

Those who believe that the story of Christ which was received by the Church from the apostles has been held fast ever since have no choice. They are compelled by the assailants to discuss questions of literature and history.

It is an error to say that, "when the modern battle *commences*"—to use Mr. Newman's phrase—it is the man who ought to be girt with "the sword of the Spirit" that is sitting at a study table, spread over with books in various languages, Tacitus and Pliny, Plotinus and Philo, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and the rest. When the battle "*commences*," it is quite another man that is sitting there: not the preacher, but the *critic*, who denies that the Lord Jesus Christ walked on the sea, cooled the fires of fever, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and raised the dead; the *critic*, who denies that the Lord Jesus Christ, after dying for the sins of men, rose again the third day, and appeared to the disciples; the *critic*, who, since he denies the truth of the story told in the Four Gospels, is endeavouring to show that we have no proof that this was the story which was told by the men who knew Christ, and that the books are by unknown authors belonging to a later generation. It is the hostile critic, not the Christian preacher, who is responsible for beginning, and continually renewing, the "modern battle," on fields which are so remote from the spiritual life of man.

When once they have been raised, the literary and historical questions at issue must be determined by

literary and historical considerations. But I endeavoured to show, in the earlier Lectures of this course, that the controversy does not touch the faith of Christian men in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of the human race, the Root of the Divine life in man, the Way to God. This faith does not ask for the protection of friendly scholarship; and the assaults of hostile scholarship cannot reach it. It needs neither Tacitus nor Pliny, neither Philo nor Plotinus, neither Justin Martyr nor Irenæus. It is in actual possession of the salvation which Christ has achieved for mankind.

But though faith in Christ is not imperilled by the literary and historical controversy, the controversy is a grave one; and in repelling the assaults of hostile criticism the Christian apologist discharges an honourable service. It is for him to show that the story of our Lord's earthly history, which has been the consolation, the support, the light, the joy of countless millions of men, has attracted their love, their wonder, and their awe, has revealed to them the loftiest ideal of human goodness, and exalted their conception of the righteousness and grace and pity of God, is not the mere dream of a fervent enthusiasm, or the deliberate invention of a daring imagination, but the story which was told by the elect friends of Christ, whom He trusted to make His Gospel known to all nations, and that it was after this manner that the Son of the Eternal lived among men.

III.

In the later Lectures I have laid before you some of the proofs on which Christian apologists rely for defence of this position. Those which I have submitted have been nearly all of one kind. There are lines of argument of a different description. But some of these can hardly be made intelligible except to persons of considerable scholarship. Others—such, for example, as that which finds in the contents of the Fourth Gospel evidence that it was written by the Apostle John—can be best examined in books; that argument is full of interest; but I did not feel that I had the skill to deal effectively, before a popular audience, with all the details which must have a place in any adequate statement of it. Nor have I exhausted the particular argument which I have endeavoured to illustrate; other quotations from other Christian writers can be alleged to corroborate it. But, in my own judgment, what I have said is sufficient, and more than sufficient, for its purpose.

I began by reminding you that, at the close of the second century, the story of the Lord Jesus Christ contained in our Four Gospels was received as authentic by Christian Churches throughout the world, that the books themselves were reverenced as sacred Scriptures, and that it was universally believed that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In A.D. 185, Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who had

spent his early years in Asia Minor, and who, about ten years before, had been sent on an important mission to Rome, wrote of the Four Gospels in a way which shows that they had been used by the Church so long, and held so high a place in the religious life of Christian people, that even the number of the Gospels was supposed to have mystical meanings.

That was about eighty-five years after the death of the Apostle John. Now it is not easy to believe that while John was living, and while other men were living who had known our Lord, spurious Gospels, containing untrustworthy accounts of what our Lord said and did, would have been received by the Church as having been written by John himself, by Matthew his brother apostle, by Mark and Luke, who were friends of Peter and Paul. If therefore it can be made clear that the Gospels—which are our Gospels —received and reverenced by Irenæus in A.D. 185 were not written after John's death, about A.D. 100, the main contention of these Lectures is established. The interval to be bridged is about eighty-five years; and the question to be determined is whether it is probable, whether it is possible, that at the end of that period Christian Churches all over the world would have received the Four Gospels as containing the original, authentic, apostolic story of Christ, if these Gospels had not been generally accepted by Christian Churches when the period began.

Eighty-five years:—it seems a long time; but it is exactly the time since my predecessor in the pastorate

of this Church came to Birmingham. He began his ministry in Carrs Lane in the early autumn of A.D. 1805. This morning I am separated by as many years from the commencement of Mr. James's ministry in this congregation as separated Irenæus, when he wrote his book *Against Heresies*, from the death of the Apostle John. That may help you to appreciate the strength of the argument which rests on the reception of the Gospels in the time of Irenæus. During the six years that I spent at Spring Hill College, between the summer of 1847 and the summer of 1853, I was frequently the guest of Mr. James. It was his custom to invite two or three of the students to dinner on Saturday afternoon ; and he used to talk to us about the work for which we were being prepared, and about his own ministry, and about the preachers who were famous early in the century. In the summer of 1853 I became his assistant, in the summer of 1854 his colleague ; and I was his colleague till his death in the autumn of 1859. During this second period of six years I was, of course, more intimately associated with him. We talked together about many things : about the history of this congregation ; about the changes which had passed upon his own theological opinions since his ministry began ; about other Congregational Churches in this city and in other parts of England ; about his early friends in the ministry ; about sermons and speeches which he had heard from men who had long been dead.

I have known, of course, a great deal about you

and your fathers since 1853, when I began my ministry here, and I have known about all the principal events in the history of the Congregational Churches of England since then ; but from my association with Mr. James, my memory, both of yourselves and of English Congregationalism, may be said to extend over the whole eighty-five years between this morning and that Sunday in September, 1805, when he preached his first sermon as your minister ; whatever important events in your history or the history of English Congregationalism happened between the beginning of his ministry and the beginning of mine I came to know through him.

For example, it would be impossible for me to suppose that this chapel—*meeting-house* was the older and better name for it—was in existence when he came to Birmingham ; for he used to talk to me about the old chapel which formerly stood on this site, about how the new chapel came to be built, and about things that happened in connexion with the opening. It would be equally impossible for me to commit the error of supposing that the Congregational Union of England and Wales is a venerable institution, founded by the Congregationalists of a century or a century and a half ago. I have what may be called a "second-hand recollection" of its formation early in the "thirties" of the present century, rather less than sixty years ago. He used to talk to me about its formation ; about the distrust with which it was regarded by some stanch Independents ; about the

drawing up of the "Declaration of Faith and Order" by Dr. Redford, of Worcester, and himself, Dr. Redford doing the larger share of the work; about its first secretary, Mr. Algernon Wells; about the smallness of the numbers that were present at the early meetings; and about the brevity of the "addresses" of the early chairmen.

And so a large number of men living in the time of Irenæus, A.D. 185, could themselves remember the principal events in the history of their own Churches and of many other Churches during the preceding thirty-five years;[1] and many of them may have known—some of them *must* have known—men whose recollections travelled back to the very beginning of the century. If the Gospels which were received by the Church at the beginning of the century—during the first ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years of it—Gospels which the Church believed were written by apostles,—if, I say, these Gospels had disappeared, and other Gospels had taken their place—taken their place in Carthage, Alexandria, Rome, Cæsarea, Smyrna, Ephesus, and Lyons—Irenæus and his contemporaries must have known it; and it would have been impossible for the new Gospels to have drawn to themselves, in the year A.D. 185, universal venera-

[1] My own memory as minister of Carrs Lane congregation extends over thirty-seven years, as my ministry commenced in 1853; but I could claim a large knowledge, both of Carrs Lane congregation and of Congregationalism during the six years between 1847 and 1853.

tion as narratives of our Lord's ministry which had been received by the Church from the hands of apostles and their immediate disciples.

Take the Gospel of John. Irenæus had heard Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord; this must have been long after John's death, perhaps as late as A.D. 145, or even A.D. 150, for Irenæus lived into the third century. Was the Fourth Gospel published before that time? Then Polycarp must have spoken of it; if John had not written it, Polycarp would have denied that it was genuine; and Irenæus, who reverenced Polycarp, would never have received it. But if it was not published before that time, if it was unknown to John's friend and disciple forty or fifty years after John's death, then, again, it is incredible that Irenæus should have received it.

Polycarp's martyrdom was in the year A.D. 155 or A.D. 156. He had known John; and for more than fifty years after the death of John he was one of the trustees and guardians of John's memory. During a great part of that time he was the most conspicuous personage among the Churches of Asia Minor. Nor did he stand alone. He lived to such an advanced age, that he probably survived all the men who had listened with him to John's teaching; but for thirty or forty years after John's death there must have been a large number of other persons who would have associated themselves with him in rejecting a Gospel which falsely claimed John's authority. While

these persons lived, such a Gospel would have had no chance of reception; and for thirty years after their death, their personal friends, who had heard them speak of their intercourse with John, would have raised a great controversy if they had been asked to receive as John's a Gospel of which the men who had listened to John himself had never heard, and which contained a different account of our Lord from that which John had given. But within thirty years after the martyrdom of Polycarp our Fourth Gospel was universally regarded by the Church as having a place among the Christian Scriptures, and as the work of the Apostle John. The conclusion seems irresistible; John must have written it.

IV.

From the Fourth Gospel let us pass to the other three. Five and thirty years before A.D. 185, we learn from Justin Martyr that when Christian Churches met for worship it was their regular custom to read certain narratives of our Lord's life, which he calls *Memoirs*, *Memoirs of the Apostles*, *Memoirs drawn up by the Apostles and those who followed them*, *Memoirs composed by them* [the apostles], *which are called Gospels*." The description of these writings corresponds accurately to our Four Gospels, which are *memoirs*, recollections, not regular biographies, and which are attributed to Matthew and John, who were apostles, and to Mark and Luke, who were followers of the apostles. In Justin's

works there are no less than 200 passages in which he either quotes words which are found in our Gospels, or refers to facts which our Gospels record. The quotations, indeed, are, for the most part, inexact; but they are such quotations as a man might make from memory. The story of our Lord which can be compiled from Justin's works is the same story as that which is given in the Gospels which are now universally received by the Church. There are a few—a very few—statements about our Lord in Justin which are not contained in any of our Gospels; as he must have known many men who had known the apostles, these statements may have come to him from tradition; the wonder is that they are not more numerous. Further, from Justin's quotations, every one of our Four Gospels receives support. It seems reasonable to infer that Justin's Gospels were the same as our own.

There is one consideration which makes this inference certain. It is not conceivable that in A.D. 185 our Four Gospels would have been regarded with religious reverence, and would have been attributed to apostles, if they had appeared within the previous five and thirty years. Living men would have clearly remembered when they were first published, and when they were first introduced into the services of the Church. In A.D. 150—just five and thirty years before A.D. 185—Justin's *Memoirs*, which he also calls *Gospels*, were being read to Christian men and women every week when they met for worship. By

what miracle did they suddenly drop out of use, and drop out of use everywhere? By what miracle did new Gospels immediately succeed to their authority, and succeed to it everywhere? By what miracle did all the copies of the old Gospels suddenly perish, so that learned men like Irenæus had no suspicion that they had ever existed, and imagined that the new Gospels had been in existence from the beginning? Churches, like nations and individuals, are slow to change their customs. It takes time in our days to induce a single group of Churches, if they are not under a strong central ecclesiastical authority, to change their hymn-book; in the second century there was no strong central ecclesiastical authority, and the great Churches stood on their traditions; and yet we are asked to suppose that between A.D. 150 and A.D. 185 they all changed their Gospels And to increase the wonder, they believed that the Gospels which they surrendered were written by apostles and followers of the apostles. It is incredible. The Gospels which were read in the Christian assemblies in Justin's time were the Gospels which a few years later were "welded together" by Justin's friend Tatian in his *Harmony*, and a few years later still were described by Irenæus in terms which show that during his memory they had always been regarded with reverence by the Church. Justin's Gospels were the Gospels of Irenæus; the Gospels of Irenæus are ours. The *Memoirs of the Apostles*, the *Gospels* which were read in the services of the

Church in A.D. 150, were the same Gospels that are read in the services of the Church every Sunday in England.

At that time, in A.D. 150, Polycarp was still living. He and the surviving friends of the Apostle John would, as I have argued already, have prevented the Church, during the first half of the second century, from accepting any Gospel as John's which John had not written. But he and they would also have prevented the Church, during the first half of the second century, from accepting any other Gospels as authentic which contained a story of Christ different from that which the original apostles had told. That during their lifetime Matthew, Mark, and Luke were received as genuine and authentic is a proof that the narrative contained in these three evangelists was, in substance, identical with that account of our Lord's life which they had heard from the beginning.

V.

But we have a definite witness to Matthew and Mark in the person of Papias of Hierapolis, who had known friends of Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Thomas, and James, and John, and Matthew ; who had known the daughters of Philip, for they were members of the Church of Hierapolis, of which he was bishop ; and who had known two men who were immediate disciples of Christ. Papias had been anxious to learn about the discourses of the apostles from the men who had listened to them and had been their disciples,

From the daughters of Philip he learned what their father had been accustomed to say about our Lord. From Aristion and "the Elder John" he learned what men who had known Christ Himself had to tell him about our Lord's miracles and teaching. He used what he learned from them in his book, entitled an *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*, or *Dominical Oracles*, which in modern language was an *Exposition of Christian Oracles* or *Christian Scriptures*; and, apparently, of the *Gospels*. On the authority of what had been told him by these persons, he says that Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Hebrew, and that Mark's Gospel consists of Mark's recollections of the discourses of Peter. In the brief passages of Papias which have come down to us, he says nothing about the third Gospel or the Fourth; he may have said nothing about them which was not universally known to the Church in the time of Eusebius, and therefore, whatever he said, Eusebius does not record it.

I think it extremely improbable that such persons as these,—the daughters of Philip, and men who had known the apostles, and two men who were the immediate disciples of our Lord,—would have believed that the first Gospel was written by Matthew, if Matthew had not written it, or that the second Gospel was written by Mark, if Mark had not written it; and I think it equally improbable that Papias would have recorded the statements of any particular individuals among them concerning the authorship of these Gospels, unless their statements had been supported

by the general consent of the rest. But though the testimony to the authorship of Matthew and Mark is in my judgment strong and sufficient, I am willing to admit that it is not absolutely decisive; there are some kinds of facts on which tradition, unsustained by other evidence, is liable to error. It is possible that Matthew did not originally write his Gospel in Hebrew, though his friends, twenty or thirty years after his death, thought that he did. It is even possible that it was not Mark, but some other friend of Peter, that composed a Gospel from his recollections of Peter's discourses. But that such persons as those whom Papias consulted accepted Matthew's Gospel and Mark's Gospel as authentic is, for me, a decisive proof that these Gospels contain, in substance, the very story which had been told by the original apostles. They had heard the apostles; they had the books; and they believed that Matthew, one of the apostles, wrote the first Gospel, and that Mark, the friend of another, wrote the second.

"Yes; but can we be quite certain that the Matthew and Mark of Papias were our Matthew and Mark?" We can. Papias published his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord* about A.D. 135; and it is from this book—probably from an introductory letter which served as its preface—that the passages of his which I have quoted are taken. He was writing about Gospels which were at that time in common use, not about Gospels which had been superseded by other documents which gave a different account of

our Lord. The Matthew and Mark of A.D. 135 were therefore the Matthew and Mark which had been received as trustworthy by men who had known several apostles, by the daughters of Philip, by two men who had known Christ. Fifteen years later, in A.D. 150, our Gospels were being read week after week when Christians met for worship. In that brief interval there was no time for the original Gospels to pass out of existence and for new Gospels to take their place. The ground is solid and firm; our Gospels were the Gospels of Irenæus; the Gospels of Irenæus were the Gospels of Justin; Justin's Gospels were the Gospels of Papias. If Papias's Gospels contained a trustworthy story of our Lord, so do ours.

VI.

In the later Lectures of this course I endeavoured to show that the Four Gospels are historically trustworthy. But I end as I began. An assurance resting on historical and literary proofs that our Four Gospels contain the very account of our Lord's miracles and teaching that was given by the apostles, and that they were written by apostles and their "followers," is not the foundation of our faith in Christ. The Gospels themselves are not necessary to our faith. There were tribes in the second century who, as Irenæus tells us, had believed in Christ, but did not possess the Christian Scriptures. And there are many men living in our own time who could say that, after their traditional confidence in the genuine-

ness and authenticity of the Four Gospels had been broken up, and while their judgment as to the age in which the Gospels were written was still in suspense, their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was unshaken. For a time mists and clouds were resting heavily on His earthly ministry; they were not certain that they knew exactly what He had said and done during those brief years in which He, the Son of the Eternal, was revealing His grace and power under the limitations of this earthly life. But they were as certain as ever of the transcendent works which He had been doing during the eighteen hundred years since He returned to His glory, and which He was doing still. They knew that, through age after age and in many lands, He had released men from the sense of guilt, had enabled them, in the power of His own life, to live righteously, and that through Him a great multitude had found God. These great things which Christ had done for others He had done for them. The books which told the story of the earthly Christ, —about these they were not sure; about Christ Himself they were always sure; and they trusted, loved, and served Him still.

The loss—the temporary loss—of certainty about our Lord's earthly history was a grave loss; but it was not without its compensations. For a time the Christ of Jerusalem and Galilee was hidden by storm-clouds of controversy, and their hearts were sore that they could see and hear Him no longer. But they climbed the blessed heights which rise above all

storms, and they learned to live in the immediate presence of the Christ who has passed into the eternal light of God, and yet is not beyond the reach of the most perplexed and most troubled of the sons of men. When they recovered the Christ of the Gospels, they saw Him transfigured and glorified.

For Christian faith it is enough to know the Living Christ; a knowledge of Christ "after the flesh"—in His place in the visible and earthly order—is not indispensable. But for the perfect strength and joy of the Christian life we must know both the Christ who lived and died in the Holy Land eighteen hundred years ago, and the Christ who, ever since His resurrection, has been saving and ruling men. To deepen your faith in the Living Christ, and to strengthen your confidence in the historical trustworthiness of the story of His earthly ministry contained in the Four Gospels, has been the object of this course of Lectures. They were begun when the frosts and the dark days of winter were with us; now that they are closing we have come to the heat and splendour of glorious summer. It may be—God grant it!—that this is a parable, and that while we have been pursuing these inquiries together, some of you have passed from wintry days of doubt into the clear light of a happy faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A (P. 109).

EUSEBIUS finished his *History* shortly before the meeting of the Council of Nicæa. At that council, and during the fierce excitements of the Arian controversy which preceded it, the authority of the sacred books of the Church was regarded as final. Arius was condemned by an Egyptian synod on "the testimony of the Divine Scriptures." On the other hand, Arius himself, when sending a copy of his creed to the emperor, adds, "This is the faith which we have received from the holy Gospels, according to the Lord's words, as the catholic Church and the Scriptures teach, which we believe in all things." But the council, though it defined some of the greatest mysteries of the eternal life of God, did not attempt to declare what books should be regarded as forming the canon of the New Testament.

Seventy years later, however, the third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) determined "that besides the canonical Scriptures nothing be read in the Church under the title of Divine Scriptures." A list of the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament is given which contains some books that we regard as apocryphal; the list of the canonical Scriptures of the New Testament is precisely the same as our own.

But the decrees of a provincial Council in Africa could not control the judgment of scholars and Churches in other countries. Throughout the West, our present canon, largely perhaps through the influence of Jerome and Augustine, was accepted from the beginning of the fifth century. In Asia Minor, Gregory Nazianzenus, who died A.D. 389, did not

acknowledge the Apocalypse. In Syria several of the disputed books were regarded with doubt as late as the sixth century, perhaps later.

The Apocalypse was placed among the disputed writings by Nicephorus of Constantinople, in the ninth century. It is curious that the Apocalypse, which was one of the seven books about whose apostolic authorship there was serious doubt in early centuries, is one of the five books about whose apostolic authorship the most recent school of destructive criticism is most certain. But gradually all the seven secured their place side by side with the books that were universally received as canonical.

The controversy was re-opened at the Reformation. Luther treated the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, and the Epistle of Jude, and the Apocalypse with great freedom. Calvin in his *Institutes* (book i., cap. vii.) declares it to be "a most pernicious error" that "the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church; as though the eternal and inviolable truth of God depended on the arbitrary will of men." He thinks that those who maintain that it depends on the determination of the Church what books are to be comprised in the canon show "great contempt of the Holy Spirit." He believes that faith in the Divine origin of Holy Scripture comes from "the secret testimony of the Spirit." For as "God alone is a sufficient witness of Himself in His own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit." For Calvin, the universal consent of the Church in the recognised canon did not close the controversy about the disputed books. He judged them, one by one, and judged them by their contents.[1] At the Council of Trent, "for the first time," says Professor Westcott, "the question of the contents of the Bible"—that is, the question what

[1] "With regard to the *Antilegomena* of the New Testament, Calvin expresses himself with hardly less boldness than Luther, though practically the followed common usage. He passes over 2 and 3 John and the Apocalypse in his commentary without notice."—Westcott: *History of the Canon*, p. 488.

books are to be included in the Bible—"was made an absolute article of faith, and confirmed by an anathema." [1] The council set out a list of the books of the Old and New Testaments, including *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, 1 and 2 *Maccabees*, and passed this decree, "If however any one does not receive the entire books with all their parts as they are accustomed to be read in the catholic Church . . . as sacred and canonical, . . . let him be anathema."

For those who inherit the true Protestant tradition, the question, What books are to be included in the canon of either the Old Testament or the New? is not one which can be finally determined by Church authority.

NOTE B (P. 135).

AN attempt is sometimes made to destroy the force of the kind of evidence alleged in these lectures for the trustworthiness of the story of the Four Gospels, by suggesting that similar evidence may be alleged on behalf of the canonicity and inspiration of the curious book called *The Shepherd*, and bearing the name of Hermas. At what date this book was written is uncertain; but it probably belongs to the middle of the second century. It is a collection of visions, parables, and precepts.

The following are the main points to be considered in comparing the "testimony" to *Hermas* with the "testimony" to our Gospels. (*a*) We learn from Eusebius that it had been read in churches, and was quoted by some ancient writers, but that it "had been spoken against by some," and therefore "could have no place among the acknowledged books." (*b*) The unknown writer of the *Muratorian Canon*, which belongs to the latter half of the second century (perhaps about A.D. 170), says that "Hermas composed *The Shepherd* very lately in our times, in the city of Rome, while the Bishop Pius, his brother, occupied the chair of the Roman Church. And therefore it should be read, but it can never be publicly used in the church either

[1] WESTCOTT: *History of the Canon*, p. 477.

among the prophets or the apostles." (*c*) Irenæus quotes it *once*, but without naming the author; and quotes it in a way which probably, but not certainly, implies that he thought it an inspired writing. (*d*) Clement of Alexandria quotes it several times as an inspired writing. (*e*) Origen quotes it several times as having the authority of Scripture; and he is the first writer that attributes it to Hermas, the friend of Paul. But this theory of the authorship is given as being nothing more than his own private opinion. "I think," he says, "that that Hermas is the writer of that book which is called *The Shepherd*, which writing seems to me very useful and, as I think, divinely inspired." But he also says that it is despised by some. (*f*) Tertullian strongly condemns it, and declares that every council of the catholic or orthodox Church judged it to be apocryphal or spurious.

It appears from these passages that *some Churches* read *The Shepherd* for a time in their public services, but this did not necessarily imply the recognition of its inspiration. Some Churches might think that Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is sufficiently edifying to justify its being read occasionally in the course of public service, without attributing to it the authority of the books of the New Testament. *Some persons* thought it an inspired book. But Tertullian strongly denied its inspiration, and maintained that it was generally regarded as spurious. Origen advanced the theory of its inspiration, and attributed it to the friend of Paul as a private opinion of his own. Evidence of this kind is wholly different from that which is advanced in the lectures for the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels; the evidence is conflicting; it consists largely in the opinions of particular individuals; so far as the evidence is derived from its use in the public services of the Church, the use was partial.

Further. The testimony of both individuals and Churches in favour of the inspiration of a book of edification is wholly different from their testimony that the Four Gospels contain the story of Christ which had been always received in the Christian Church. The testimony to the inspiration of *Hermas* rested on the *judgment* of those who believed it to be inspired: the testi-

mony to the Gospels, as containing the story of Christ which had been told by apostles, rested on a continuous and unbroken tradition. The one was a question of opinion ; the other was a question of fact.

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